Encounter

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The Revolution nobody noticed

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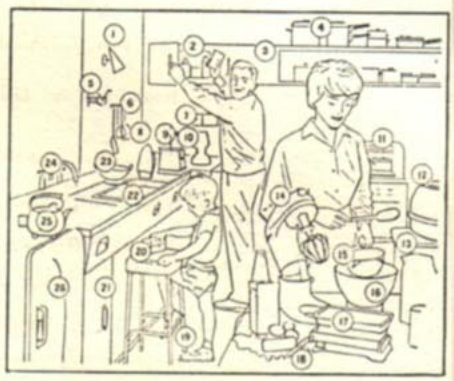

All these are made wholly or partly of steel

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13. Washing machine
14. Mixer
15. Sieve
16. Mixing bowl
17. Scales
18. Kitchen knife
19. Stool
20. Toy bus
21. Kitchen unit
22. Sink
23. Colander
24. Taps
25. Electric kettle
26. Refrigerator

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Marguerite Yourcenar

The Legend of Krishna

Notes on Erotic and Mystical Themes

INDIA has its great myths of love and sex. They tell of the god Shiva and his spouse Parvati locked in a mystic embrace for thousands of years; had that divine union borne issue it would have destroyed the world. They tell, too, of Shiva seducing the wives of heretical monks who had quitted his shrines; these anchorites raised up monsters against him, in revenge, but such magical creation served only to deck the god with new attributes and new adornment. There is the story of Kali, whose severed head fixed to the corpse of a lowly courtesan reveals Deity soldered to what is held vile. Of all these myths, the most beautiful, probably, and the one most charged with devotional and mystic implication, the one best expressing the body's and the heart's desires, is the legend of Krishna descending into the forest among the Gopi, or herd girls; the celestial shepherd wanders the woods, charming all with the music of his flute, wild creatures, demons, maidens. In the clearings where their cattle graze, the amorous Gopi throng round the god; He-Who-is-Everywhere satisfies his thousand tender loves at one and the same time; each of them (if one may distort the well-known line) possesses him for herself alone, and all have him entire. Their phallic revel is a symbol of the soul's union with the Divine.

*

The legend comes down to us in one of the mainstreams of myth. This god whom the woodland maidens pursue, who affords them physical and mystic ecstasy alike, is a Dionysos. This musician soothing the frightened beasts is Orpheus. This shepherd who comforts the human soul's yearning for love is the Good Shepherd. But the Greek Orpheus dies along the barbarous reaches of the Strymon, for disdaining the Bacchantes' mad desire; Dionysos leads his Maenads into pathless wilds haunted by the oldest terrors known to man; the Christian Good Shepherd walks in the shadow of the Cross. There is nothing tragic or sombre in the Orpheus-Bacchus of the Ganges: Krishna's union with the herd maids is consummated in perfect peace, in the heart of an innocent Eden. For such is the mystic forest of Vrindavana; it belongs to the eternal realm of pastoral poetry, where dwelt Venus with Anchises in the stable, or with Adonis in a woodland glade; there Apollo tended flocks for the love of Admetus. Tristan and Isolde in their leafy bower, Siegmund and Sieglinde at the hut door, hearkening to the murmurs of a night in spring, Tess of the D'Urbervilles keeping secret her love in the dairy among the farm girls, yes, even the bewigged and powdered shepherds of our 18th century, all such characters turning back to a primitive, ideal world (which seems to us at first sight artificial, but is no more so than any dream of bliss), all have their ancient prototypes in Krishna the lover and his ardent herd girls.

*

CHRISTIANITY, it can hardly be denied, has tried to reduce the human

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soul to a state of pre-pubescent innocence (a state less real, in any case, than imaginary, and far removed from actual childhood experience). Likewise Christianity has sought, and in large measure achieved, a complete separation of the sacred from the sensual, except within the marriage bond itself, and even there it has hedged sex in with so many prohibitions and commands as to leave the whole subject forever bound up with the concept of sin.

But the trouble begins much farther back than the Gospels and the Church. Greek intellectualism and Roman austerity, as well, were early at work to effect scission between the spirit and the flesh. That loftiest exposition of the Greek philosophy of love, *The Symposium*, is also the swan song of purely physical delight: for Plato, already, the senses have become mere slaves of the soul. Seneca has hardly less disdain for the flesh than has the mediæval author of *De Contemptu Mundi*. In Western Europe, Celts and Germanic peoples punished illicit love by burning or drowning, even before the Christian era; the influence of such superstitions and barbarous codes was incorporated in the rigour of the Church. In later periods, with the rise of middle-class respectability, and with capitalist and totalitarian ideologies together breeding robots and push-button men, freedom of the senses was to be held quite as suspect as liberty of the soul itself.

For the European, in fact, sexual pleasure will have meant many and disparate things in turn. It has been regarded as a physical satisfaction to be more or less sanctioned, but little worthy of much time on the part of a philosopher or statesman. It has been hailed as a mystical step towards the higher love of the soul. It has been denounced as a sinful luxury, a kind of spice added to the sober fare of holy matrimony, or, on the contrary, has been valued chiefly as a gymnastic exercise, from the manuals of Aretino. Some have called it a shameful appeasement of the Beast in man, that Beast which makes his Angel weep; others glorify it as the supreme reward of fidelity in love. Or it falls into the categories of a pleasant pastime, a tender failing, or, most often of all, a theme for coarse jokes.

No one of these views accepts pleasure pure: the Western world tends to confuse this particular issue. Sade chills sensuality with his contrived frenzies. Valmont, of the *Liaisons Dangereuses*, subordinates his sexual enjoyments to his masculine vanity; Madame de Merteuil, his accomplice, gratifies first of all her love of intrigue. Good Freudians hitch their notion of love play to childhood memories, while hazy idealists gloss pleasure over with their hypocrisy. In art, even in the freest and most propitious periods, both painter and sculptor have been forced to seek excuse in myth or in legend in order to express more fully the poetry of the senses, or else they have had to cover their tender nudes with the protective varnish of some æsthetic theory. Ingres himself would hardly have admitted how much sheer voluptuousness there is in his *Turkish Bath*.

In literature, likewise, it is surprisingly difficult to come upon a representation of sexual pleasure enjoyed for itself alone; either some shoddy moral is tacked on, belatedly, with the twofold purpose of reassuring the reader while protecting the author, or we are treated to a pseudo-scientific tone, to conventional cynicism or disgust, or to the knowing smile or loud guffaw which is supposed to pass everything off. One does, indeed, change continents in turning from such utter confusion to the Hindu's instinctive, but religious, approach to love, to that conception of divinity perceived through physiological means which underlies all the amorous sport known as the Krishna Lila.

*

CERTAIN cheap romanticising about the East leads some enthusiasts to assume that no moral restrictions obtain upon the life of the senses there. But the primitive codes of India are hardly less severe than those of *Leviticus*; behind them one feels the same repressive forces at work, eternally: superstitious fear of sex; jealousy or greed in chieftain or father which tends to make of his women-folk well-guarded chattels; general

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ignorance, stupid routine, and primitive reasoning by analogy. There is the same eternal effort to reduce sexual pleasure to the purely procreative function. And more crippling still, perhaps, is man's own curious instinct for complicating sheer fact, or for simplifying it arbitrarily.

Moral codes, to be sure, are one thing, social practices another. The discrepancies between the two are particularly conspicuous in the domain of sensual experience where, more than anywhere else, the human creature seems able to breathe, wholly at ease, in depths comparable to that of the ocean floor, far below the changing surface of opinions, precepts, ideas, and even below the level of articulate discourse, or clear perception of facts. A certain amorous caress traditionally condemned by Vedic scripture appears undisguised in the bas-reliefs of the Krishna Lila. We meet ambivalence, it is true, everywhere and in every period in matters of sexual morality (though the same ambivalence reigns in other subjects as well); and concessions on one point are offset by refusals on another, as if each liberty granted must immediately be compensated for by severity elsewhere. Thus India has precipitated its daughters into marriage, thereby promising them satisfaction on reaching the age of nubility, but she has isolated her widows, or subjected them to suttee. In the very period in which Hindu sculptors were so freely representing Krishna's dalliance with the herd maids, images of Hindu Hell were threatening the libidinous with torments as awful as those inflicted upon carnal sinners by the sculptured devils of our cathedrals.

*

All the great religions originating in India have recommended the practice of asceticism. The Brahmanist's obsession with Being and the Buddhist's obsession with Non-Being come both to the same result for the Saint in either following, namely, disdain for all that is merely of the moment, for all that suffers change, and for all that comes to an end. The Brahmanic anchorite quits his family and worldly possessions to liberate himself by asceticism; Buddha is portrayed by Gandharian sculptors as leaving his wives in like fashion forever, while they lie sleeping, voluptuously relaxed. But such departure and such asceticism bespeak no penitence and no flight from sin, no more than the Christian's obsession with sin of the flesh corresponds at all closely to the fear of ritual impurity, although that obsession is rooted in some such fear. Detachment on the part of the Hindu sage implies neither disgust nor puritanical disapproval, nor conviction about the indignity of sex. In fact, in some Hindu sects, as is also the case in certain heretical groups within Christianity, the sexual act becomes for the mystic just what it always has been for popular Hinduism, one of the symbols and forms of union with Deity. The supreme Atman of the Brahmanist, Absolute Being, comprises within itself all the amorous play of the thousands of beings which make up the multiple worlds; similarly, the frenzied embraces of the gods are accepted in Tantric Buddhism as part of the great Cycle of Things.

*

THE more typically Hindu the art of India becomes, the more erotic sensibility it expresses. The voluptuousness which imbues the tall, slender nudes of the early Buddhist frescoes at Ajanta grows apace in the almost rococo sculpture at Kaïlasa, swelling out the curves of the river-goddesses; in the Shivas of later periods this eroticism rises to a dancing fury. The same voluptuous quality is expressed, though in bodies of squatter proportions, in the bas-reliefs contemporary with our own mediæval period at Aurangabad, Mahavalipuram, and Khajuraho, devoted to the loves of Krishna and the Gopi. These bodies are round, smooth, and almost elastic, with the unresisting density of honey poured upon honey; if the trunks were severed they would surely reveal but a single, uniform substance, like the pulp of ripe fruit. Once cut, these arms and legs would grow again, like stalks or roots. It must be sap that circulates in their veins, not blood, or perhaps it is that

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seminal fluid which some Bodhisattvas have instead of blood. Here and there one can hardly tell if a sculptured hand touching a sexual organ is really hand or penis. Is that a knee or an elbow enclosing a naked thigh? These two mouths are sucking leeches, and those noses brushing together extend as if sketched for elephants' trunks. The Gopi maidens bend under the weight of their enormous, bell-shaped breasts like young trees laden at the harvest. One impetuous girl has leapt upon her god and lover and clings with her legs doubled under her, heels joining, like a monkey on the trunk of a tree.

In this "art of love" male and female characteristics merge almost as much as do the animal and vegetal worlds; although Krishna never attains to the disquieting femininity of Shiva, that other indefatigable bridegroom, his headdress and ornaments, and the rhythmic curves of his body, make for a certain equivocation, if not actual error. Any fragment where two mouths join or two bodies entwine might be two Gopi embracing each other. By the organ of sex alone is this utterly masculine god revealed clearly as male.

At times it would seem that humorous elements have crept into these Hindu religious reliefs, much as they do in the work of our mediæval sculptors; there is something like the sound of low, stifled laughter which, no less than a sigh, is one of the murmurs of love. But nowhere is there trace of the almost unbearable contraction of Japanese licentious drawings, nor is there the sharp, intellectualised delineation of Greek vase paintings with obscene subjects. The profuse sensuality of Hindu art flows through its forms like a languid, broad-spreading river.

*

"The dear one lay nude; knowing well my delight,
She wore only her dancing bracelets of gold.
. . . . . .
This sonorous world of metal and gems
Throws me in ecstasy,
For I love to distraction whatever blends light and sound."

(BAUDELAIRE, *The Jewels*)

From the 6th to the 13th century of our era, long after India had absorbed and in part discarded the lessons of Greco-Buddhist art, and before she had been swept by new currents from the West which were to bring her the art of Persia, the amorous adventure of Krishna, the "Blue God," is expressed for the first time in purely Hindu terms, and with conventions which change so little that it is difficult, at first sight, to distinguish a Gopi of the caves of Aurangabad from her sister figure at Khajuraho, seven centuries younger. The great doll-like heads retain their intricate coiffures with perfect composure, in spite of the acrobatics of love; the eyes, or rather, the eyelids, are made by a single flat line suggesting the conventional stylisation of theatrical make-up, as if it were less a matter of opening the eyes to see than of closing them for delight; the naked bodies are decked with elaborate trappings of jewels. Head-dress, cosmetics, and jewellery are universal means of giving a nude form the specific marks of an age, and of a civilisation: Krishna with his jangling necklaces is a rajah among his wives; these Gopi ravished in the forest at the dawn of time are sacred ballerinas professionally contorted in postures of the dance; this girl so astonishingly twisted, quill in hand, reddening the sole of her foot, completes her bridal toilette by an immemorial rite. Even the most secret desire of the harem at the hour of bliss is expressed in these sculptures by the ubiquity of the divine embrace. Aesthetic or sensuous refinements of this kind which a European poet like Baudelaire enjoys only nostalgically, and almost perversely, with a sensibility all the more acute for running counter to his times, are expressed in Hindu art as part of the usual, stylised vocabulary of love. The illicit and the unfamiliar, those two ingredients indispensable to pornography, are utterly lacking here.

*

At much the same time that Hindu art and religion were devoutly evoking the union of Krishna with the maidens, in mediæval Europe ancient phallic rites of the pagan peasantry, proscribed by the church, were re-

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treating over forest and heath to take refuge in the witches' dens. The thousand fair of the woodlands, hugged to their miraculous lover, and the ancient crone riding her broomstick or clutching the Sabbath goat as she races to the Brocken, there to copulate with Satan, are two nearly contemporary expressions of physical desire. The amorous writhings of the sculptured Gopi may tire our eyes, and even our sensuous appetites, but such openly avowed eroticism has spared India our drab and sorry excursions into diabolism.

*

THE story of Krishna and the herd maids is told in a long lyric recitative, the *Gita Govinda*, written by the Bengali court poet Jayadeva in the 12th century of our Christian era. It is difficult to pass judgment on the literary qualities of the work, whatever the merits of the translations, not because it is remote from us in time and in space, but because it answers only too well to the popular conception of Oriental love poetry, steeped, as it were, in heavy perfumes, and ill-according with the tastes (and perhaps with the literary prejudices) of European readers of this second half of the 20th century. We have long since wearied of these profusions and these languors. Of all the poetic literature of Asia, that of India, from Kalidasa to Tagore, amazes us by its prodigality, its indolent ease, its turgid repetitions; by its comparative indifference to man himself, immersed as it is in the universal flow of things. Its romanticism is both heady and cloying. Jayadeva is no exception to the rule. His work is not in the least primitive; it is highly ornate, and even consciously literary. The Bengali poet stands in the same relation to Sanskrit epic as the erudite Alexandrians did to Homer. He takes up the theme nearly two thousand years earlier by his predecessor of the *Bhagavata Purana*, but stresses chiefly the romantic and voluptuous aspects of the myth; the motif of satisfaction accorded to the thousand herd maidens alternates with the plaints of Radha, the abandoned one, until the moment that the god at last grants the weeping beauty her share of bliss.

But this heroine is hardly characterized; the poetic universe of India is not that of individuation, nor even that of clearly-defined types. While each of the "thousand and three" of Don Juan's list of conquests remains a separate little creature in her own right, more or less differentiated from the others, however light and shallow she may be, the thousand maidens described by Jayadeva could well be the whole world of women in one; each Gopi in her turn could be Radha. Nor is this universe at all tragic: herein jealousy is only a temporary concern, and grief melts at once into rapture. Vernal and bodily luxuriance together prevail. The reader who wanders among these moist, swooning nudities is apt to recall that curious phantasy of pre-classic French literature, *The Dream of Francion*, with its flower-bed of breasts upon which the hero ecstatically treads.

Analogies with the animal and vegetal kingdoms abound in Jayadeva, just as in the sculpture of the temples: Krishna is "the glittering dancer who multiplies his members," or "the trunk from which branches spring forth, pecked by birds." Hair is the creeping vine, arms are stems; breasts are nuts of the palm tree, vulvae are lotus flowers. Misled by a resemblance which affords Hindu literature one of its stock comparisons (and Hindu art a stock pattern), Krishna mistakes a young elephant's trunk for the thigh of a beloved. What the Greek would express as a process of metamorphosis the Hindu feels and describes as an ecstasy of identification.

Not only is the *Gita Govinda*, like any other poem, bound by echoes and allusions to a specific literary tradition; it is inseparable, above all, from Hindu culture as a whole, that culture both more sophisticated than our own and yet closer to the natural world from which it issues. The work reflects the life of the small court where these verses were composed and recited for the first time, in some pavilion beside a pool, and inevitably recalls the women and the tame gazelles, the spiced and sugared sweets, the strangely haunting music, and the easy satisfaction of

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desire, ever burning, ever readily appeased. In short, the poem of Jayadeva cannot be judged apart from all those things around him which served to justify and aliment the mystic glorification of pleasure.

*

It is, in fact, in this period which very nearly corresponds to our mediæval period, and it is in Bengal, in particular, that the Krishna myth acquires new significance through the growth of that tender, mystical devotion, or *bhakti*, which sees God as Ineffable Love and which is not so very different, *mutatis mutandis*, from certain forms of Christian piety recurring throughout the centuries. Furthermore, in reacting against metaphysical speculation in favour of more concrete forms of devotion, mediæval India seems to have gone through an evolution comparable to that which Catholicism was to experience some centuries later on, during the Counter-Reformation. The swooning Saint Catherine of Sodoma's painting and the enraptured Saint Theresa of Bernini, the tender concealment of the Magdalen's bosom beneath her long penitential locks, all betray the same need to fuse sensual with religious ecstasy, an end expressed by the Hindu Gopi simply in sexual enjoyment. In both cases the adoring subject tries to establish the most intimate union possible with the object of his adoration, obliging the Infinite, Absolute, and Eternal to incarnate itself in a human (sometimes too human) form which can respond to love as well as inspire it.

The loving Krishna of the *Gita Govinda* is far removed from Krishna the Sun God, avatar of Vishnu in the Vedic scriptures, yet he still retains his solar splendour in the magnificent outpouring of his gifts. He is far, too, yet not wholly removed, from the awesome Lord of the *Bhagavad Gita* who serves its author as mouthpiece for the most dangerous doctrines of Hindu thought: the identity of creation and destruction; the indifference of Indestructible Being towards those merely transitory events, birth and death; the futility of the boundaries set by man between good and evil in presence of the terrible life power which flows through and transcends all forms. Likewise Jayadeva's Krishna, torrent of delights, though incarnated in a body, is still too tumultuous, too little differentiated from elemental force, for this devotional recitative to relate in any way to the tremulous, confiding discourse which other poets have held with a personal god, such as the moving songs of the Sufis in Persia, in this same 12th century, tenderly evoking the one and only Beloved. God for Jayadeva is Lover more than Friend.

*

Let us beware the error of so many archæologists of our day who venture into the field of anthropology, the mistake of reading into a more recent past those primitive concepts which survive, at best, only as unconscious substratum to that later thought and feeling. The Krishna legend as told by Jayadeva cannot be reduced to the simple terms of a tribal fertility myth, no more, indeed, than can the *Attis* of Catullus, or Bion's *Lament for Adonis*. Such works treat of our own sensations, and our own ecstasies. The scholar who explains a myth or a sexual rite by its utilitarian and tribal significance alone (thereby disinfecting it, whether consciously or not, of an eroticism disturbing to him) is unduly simplifying the whole prehistoric world; primitive man, after all, had a body, like us.

But let us avoid equally the error of over-idealisation, which would interpret this legend of ardent passion as a mere spiritual symbol, or as chaste, basically allegory, carefully concealed. To minimise the part played by sexual rapture in the *Gita Govinda* is to reject the principal characteristics of the very discipline to which the poet apparently adheres, the Laya-Yoga, wherein man strives to attain to the Absolute precisely through the medium of those powerful sensual energies that lie dormant within him. The poet himself has plainly defined his intention: "Here is expressed, in poetic form, the varied procedures which lead to the essential understanding of the art of love." Sexual

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pleasure, in the work of Jayadeva, need not be considered as a kind of carnal enticement to be later discarded, perhaps equivocally or hypocritically, in favour of some supposedly nobler significance. For the Hindu poet the sexual organs are both symbol and Deity manifest, just as is the Lingam-Yoni, emblem of joined male and female organs before which the exquisite princesses of the Mogul miniatures repeatedly prostrate themselves. Orgasm, for Radha, is indeed the ecstasy of a soul possessed by God, but that soul vibrates in the flesh.

*

"The peacocks dance for joy. . . . The cows come running, the fresh grass still in their jaws, and the calves come all splattered with their mothers' milk. The beasts weep tears of joy when they hear the flute of the Shepherd. . . ." So runs the story of Krishna in the ancient *Bhagavata Purana*. Neither Jayadeva's poem nor the temple sculpture gives much place in the legend to the gentle presence of animals (which, on the contrary, abound in the tenderer scenes of Mogul miniature, where Krishna disguised as a milkmaid milks the cows alongside his fair loves). And nevertheless such friendship for beasts has always played a considerable part in this religious idyll: neither human happiness nor divine ecstasy is complete without the contentment of these humbler creatures which man exploits, but which share with him the adventure of existence. In Greek lore, animals were associated with the gods chiefly in matters of love. The unique beauty of this Hindu myth is little understood if one fails to see in it a wholly fraternal sympathy for beings of other species and other domains, a feeling which exists alongside the burning sensuality of the myth, and perhaps just because that sensuality is given almost free rein. Such tenderness possibly comes down from ancient animistic belief, but it has long since been transmuted into a very conscious form of charity and remains one of India's finest gifts to mankind. Christian Europe has hardly known that particular form of sensibility, and then only too briefly, in the course of the Franciscan pastoral, when both bird and wolf were befriended and blessed.

*

THE sacred legend of Krishna is nowhere more exquisitely set forth than in a cult statue of southern India (to be found in Paris to-day in the Guimet Museum), a bas-relief in wood representing the god clad as a cowherd playing on his flute to his kine. Save for the quadruple arms, nothing in this delicately human figure suggests omnipotent divine force: two hands hold the instrument, while two are raised in blessing. Though a relatively recent work, thought by some scholars to be as late as the 17th century, it is one of those which best reveal, even through the Hindu luxuriance of style, the active survival of Greek influences which marked Hindu art from its beginnings. The exaggerated curve of the "Blue God's" hips is almost Praxitelian; his long rippling pantaloons are much like those with which Greco-Roman artists garbed their young Asiatic divinities, their Attises and their Mithrases. A silent melody, wherein we recognise the poignant, throbbing, *sacred* music of India, flows from the lips of the god out over the foliage-like plumes of his headdress, over the easy, rhythmic curves of the divine posture, and down to the adoring beasts. That solitary song helps us better to understand the frantic treading of the Gopi around the temple pillars, and the mighty, bounding movement of the thousand blissful couples in the forest, who are themselves the Forest of Beings.

"Et Venus in silvis jungebat corpora amantium," says nobly Lucretius. What India has added to the vast cosmic pastoral of love, which has haunted the human imagination from earliest times, is her profound sense of the one in many, the pulsation of a joy which pervades plants, animals, God, and man. Both blood and sap respond to the call of the holy Flautist; to him the postures of love are but figures of a dance.

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Anthony Sampson

Gossip

"Don't think you can fool a guy like me,
The best things in life are never free—
Guys like me who are on the inside
Cannot be taken for a ride. . . ."

THEME SONG FROM
"THE WORLD OF PAUL SLICKEY."

AS a schoolboy, evacuated to the country during the war, I took for a time London gossip-writers as my heroes: redolent with metropolitan glory their worldly names acquired for me (and for many of my schoolfellows) a special splendour. Who, we wondered, were these inexhaustible men-about-town, called Carpenter, Atticus, the Londoner, or Peterborough? A Baron, we imagined, or perhaps a Bishop. It did not then seem surprising that the same man should attend two functions in the morning, have two society lunches, look in at Westminster and Whitehall in the afternoon, and go to a City banquet and a first night in the evening; and it was part of the image that he should, as a sideline to his *mondaine* life, dictate a few witty paragraphs to a secretary in St. James' Square before he took his nightcap.

It was not long before that vision was shattered. I discovered one afternoon walking down Fleet Street, that Peterborough was a shabby courtyard adjoining the *Daily Telegraph* building, and (much later) that most of the columns were written by syndicates of professional journalists, rummaging through magazines to collect their jokes, ringing up other journalists to collect anecdotes, or arranging to call on celebrities with notebook in hand.

But even after this disillusion, the gossips kept some magic. They might not be real people, but they still achieved a kind of life of their own. And it was a magic, or fraud, which had a respectable history. It might even be said that British journalism began with the gossip column; for Addison's *Spectator* was little more than that. While it took the form of fiction, it was designed to give the same impression of inner sophistication, the same vivid picture of London club life for the benefit of country squires and provincial middle classes, which has lain behind the gossip columns ever since. My admiration for Peterborough and his peers, from the wilds of Hertfordshire, may not have been so different from the fascination of an 18th-century country doctor with the doings of Sir Roger de Coverley. Addison knew something about circulation; and he knew, as all later editors have remembered, that to attract provincial sales for a quality newspaper, you write not about the real life in the provinces, but the fantasy-life of London.*

* When three years ago the *News Chronicle* began their new gossip-column, called John London, they at first changed the name for their Northern edition to John Derby. But their Northern readers were indignant at being palmed off with provincial chat, and the name was quickly changed back to John London.

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IT WAS an odd irony that several years later, when I had almost forgotten my early admiration, I found myself accidentally writing a weekly column in *The Observer* called *Table Talk*, under the name Pendennis. Though I now had no illusions of grandeur, it still seemed something like putting on a velvet smoking-jacket and walking into Pratt's. There was even a very occasional letter addressed to "Lord Pendennis."

There were, too, plenty of invitations. But as I soon discovered—as any journalist discovers—they were part of the elaborate machinery of synthetic fame, the network of public-relations devices, which works its cogs and levers through London social life. There are few moments so depressing as the time when, in the midst of champagne to celebrate some dull new stunt or product, a worried public-relations officer comes up and anxiously asks: "This should make a good paragraph for you, shouldn't it?"

I had few illusions: the apparatus of the good gossip-writer was not so much a matter of dinner-parties and race-meetings, as of telephone numbers and filing-systems. British (as opposed to American) gossip-writers have usually entered the Great World through the tradesmen's entrance. When my namesake Arthur Pendennis, the hero of Thackeray's novel, first encountered the world of Fleet Street, it was not so different from to-day:

> It was a grand, nay, a touching sight, for a philosopher to see Jack Finucane, Esquire, with a plate of meat from the cook-shop, and a glass of porter from the public-house, for his meal, recounting the feasts of the great, as if he had been present at them; and in tattered trousers and dingy shirt-sleeves, cheerfully describing and arranging the most brilliant fêtes of the world of fashion. The incongruity of Finucane's avocation, and his manners and appearance, amused his new friend Pen. Since he left his own native village, where his rank probably was not very lofty, Jack had seldom seen any society but such as used the parlour of the taverns which he frequented, whereas from his writing you would have supposed that he dined with ambassadors, and that his common lounge was the bow-window of White's. . . .

This was the irony that John Osborne curiously missed, when he attacked the gossip-writers in *The World of Paul Slickey*. For Paul Slickey was the brother-in-law of a Peer, and moved as freely in Tory country-houses as in Fleet Street: Slickey was a genuinely powerful figure.

> *In my cashmere coat and my seat at the Caprice,*
> *The newest public wonder waits my merciful release.*

Although the most social gossip columns make frequent use of brothers-in-law or other spies, who spill the beans from the country-house parties, the actual professional journalists are far less ducal figures. Slickey, indeed, often seems less like his originals—Paul Tanfield and William Hickey—than like a fantasy Osborne.

> *I'm just a guy called Paul Slickey,*
> *And the job that I do's quite tricky,*
> *I'm twenty-eight-years-old*
> *And practically everybody, anybody, anything you can think of*
> *Leaves me quite completely, newspaperneatly*
> *Quite quite cold.*

How differently the real gossip-writers saw themselves emerged in their violent reactions to the first showing of *Slickey* in Bournemouth. However much they might like, in their columns, to appear as worldly Slickeys, they showed themselves in their comments quite shocked by Osborne's lecherous, hard-drinking hero, and most anxious to show their respectable professional status: "The only columnist I know," said Paul Tanfield in the *Daily Mail*, "who drank at the typewriter disappeared rapidly in an alcoholic haze. Kissing in the office, where some two hundred gather in one vast room, would be rather like wooing at Wembley on an international day. . . ."

The joke of gossip-writers is not in the gay promiscuous world of Osborne's *Daily Racket*, full of debs and bright sophisticated young men; it is in the picture (much as it was in Thackeray's day) of anxious professionals elaborately assembling their debonair newsprint character, with a telephone, a typewriter, and a card-index.

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Greatness and Success

WHAT exactly that newsprint character should be, is something I have often thought about since I inherited my title. It is an inevitable introspection if only because one must wonder, as one uses the word *"I"* or *"we,"* exactly who *"I"* is. It is not as limited a speculation as it sounds, for it involves the whole problem of the *newspaper's* personality. A gossip-column (together with the *Letters to the Editor*) constitutes the closest frontier between a paper and its readers.

There is a wide range of possible *I*'s. Does one go the whole hog, to construct a mythical *I*, complete with the implication of several clubs, a smoking jacket, port and cigars, a town house and a place in the country? Or does one, at the other end of the scale, adopt an attitude of homely honesty—describing the actual process of calling on a celebrity, and asking him questions? This is the formula favoured by the *New Yorker*, in the "Talk of the Town": their *"we"* is quite plainly a group of civilised, wonderfully amateurish journalists, with happy homes and interesting childhoods, wondering whom to write about every week. They deliberately parody the language of professionals with domestic information about "an artist of our acquaintance, aged four . . .", or news from "Our Third Avenue Correspondent," or "Our Man Stanley."

There is much to be said, in terms of integrity, for this straightforward technique. This, for example, is the kind of paragraph one might write if one were being entirely honest:

> I never heard of this diplomat until yesterday, when someone came into my office and said there was a good peg for writing about him. I rang up someone in the Foreign Office who told me that he gets very drunk. A girl-friend of his said that he likes playing the 'cello out of tune. According to *Who's Who* he went to Winchester and enjoys walking. That's about all I can tell you. . . .

But a newspaper columnist (as opposed to a literary magazine) has to make use of other people for his news and judgment; and he has to try to project his characters, in flesh and blood, into the reader's mind. The picture of the telephone and the typewriter, which obtrudes between the reader and the subject, must be eliminated, and so a corporate personality of the columnist begins to take shape. Setting aside the more scoopish, social gossips, who concentrate on newsy plunder from the stately homes, the majority of the columnists depend for much of their appeal on the construction of their fantasy-character.

The actual personality varies enormously with the newspapers. My own favourite is still Peterborough, the centrepiece of the *Daily Telegraph*. Peterborough appears as a very old, affable bore, with unquestioning respect for all kinds of seniority, particularly military, and with very little malice. His favourite theme is reminiscing about minor colleges or public schools. His descriptions of people have the eulogistic character and vocabulary ("grieve," "unsparing," "countless friends") of premature obituaries. In Peterborough's world, there is no real substitute for age; his characters are nearly all aged, and many dead. His finest paragraphs have the ancient, almost shaky tone of voice one associates with Boodles' bow-window:

> Lord Curzon would grieve to know [wrote P on June 4, 1959] in what dereliction the British Consulate in Mashed is to-day.

P seems to have achieved an almost telepathic closeness with the *Telegraph*'s ageing readers, whose admiring letters appear in the next-door column:

> Peterborough's note on St. Edmund's Hall's "mystic success" will be appreciated by Old Aularians everywhere. . . .

While Peterborough is preoccupied with age and rank, his cousin (nephew, perhaps) Atticus in the *Sunday Times* is obsessed with the idea of success—a tall, visible ladder leading from Young Conservatives right up to Sir Miles Thomas, Lord Chandos, and Greatness —the secret ingredient of the *Sunday Times*. Atticus lives in a world without failures, socialists, or poverty, where all the men are clever, and all the girls attractive. Success is

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measured by public acclaim—*i.e.*, by newspapers and television—and at the end of the year there is a list of the most successful successes. Included *ex officio* in the successes are all members of the staff of the *Sunday Times*, about whom Atticus is breathless with admiration: "The 64,000-dollar question: will Hobson come back from the Helsinki Theatre Festival agog with news of a Finnish Feuillère? . . ."

While Peterborough, one imagines, has a small private income, an old Daimler, and a crumbling house in Smith Square, one suspects that Atticus has made his own way in business, lives in Virginia Water, and drives in his Jaguar to lunch at the Institute of Directors.

THE most famous of the gossip-writers is William Hickey, which was first launched in the *Daily Express* by Tom Driberg (who edited it) in the 'thirties. Hickey is the embodiment of that vital ingredient to the *Daily Express*, known as "Glitter." Champagne and chandeliers are Hickey's staple diet, and the column aims to make the reader feel that he, too, is part of this dazzling world. The obvious discrepancy between the four million readers of the *Express*, taking their holidays at Clacton or Torquay, and the *dramatis personæ* of the column, disporting themselves on the Riviera, makes it difficult for Hickey himself, representing both groups, to have a fixed personality: he emerges as a shadowy, rootless, classless figure, a Group Captain perhaps, with a suite at the Dorchester, a permanent table at the Caprice, and the use of a Riviera villa. Hickey manages both to suggest a lifetime's experience of Glitter, and yet still to be surprised by it—a difficult feat:

Never have I known such a glitter as this. . . .

Without Glitter, Hickey would be as sounding brass; the workaday achievements of Peterborough's major-generals, or Atticus' managing directors, are of little interest to Hickey, unless they have Glitter too. Indeed, one feels sometimes that Hickey never actually sees people in *daylight* at all. To generate the necessary wattage of Glitter, Hickey reels off long lists of titles, like an incantation: they are usually minor peers, without a word of explanation or description, of whom few readers will have heard; but Lords, like an opera chorus, are an essential part of the production. Hickey, like *My Fair Lady*, finds his ultimate heaven at Ascot.

The *Daily Mail*'s gossip team, Paul Tanfield—who alone of gossips is allowed a favoured position on the back page—is determined both to have his Glitter and to tarnish it. Tanfield's favourite situations are divorces, separations, unhappy families, and quarrels. He is the master of innuendo and sneer—techniques which have given him an unrivalled reputation in Fleet Street.

All the popular newspaper columns depend a great deal on Glitter. But some, with more puritan consciences, find some embarrassment at having to deal in tinsel rather than sterling worth. The *News Chronicle*'s "John London," for instance, seems undecided between champagne and cocoa for his daily beverage. Occasionally old London seems to have forsworn bubbly altogether, and turns to describing honest, hard-working, unglittering people. But it is a hard choice: the story is told of how London, invited to a dashing Wild West party by an ambitious socialite, decided after a tussle with his Quaker conscience to stay away, only to be rebuked the next day for missing the Glittering story which all the other populars had carried.

To preach a good cause in a gossip-column is as awkward as discussing Central Africa at a theatrical cocktail party. Who is there whose heart does not sink a little as he reads these opening words in the *Reynold's News* column?

> While over-dressed Top Girls from neighbouring South Kensington were tottering across the turf at Ascot last week, I called on a fellow Londoner in a dingy basement office in Notting Hill. . . .

The *Mirror* man, John Rolls, has a different kind of problem: he must describe the champagne, but with the right suggestion of Socialist scorn and a hint that beer, after all,

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is best. Rolls, in spite of his name, takes on the character of a Cockney interloper, getting on well with the Toffs but keeping them in place. The kind of story that Rolls likes best is (12/6/59):

> The six hundred boys of that top school Harrow have been banned from sucking lollies in the street. . . .

Separate Tables

WHILE the fantasies of the popular columns centre round a night-club or a race-track, the more serious-minded columnists cultivate the atmosphere of a club. For it is in the club, ever since Addison's day, that people have imagined the kind of close community which they may lack in their own lives—a community where national news is the currency of conversation. Americans, who feel the lack of the old-school-and-club tradition without realising how dull it is, seem to have an even stronger faith in clubs as the citadels of gossip, or in other imagined meeting-places: *"News and Gossip Gathered along the Rialto"* is the nostalgic heading to the *New York Times* theatrical column.

The club is an escape from the drab typewriter-telephone image, and it has always played its part in journalists' fantasies. *The Times*, with the elaborate clubmanship of its fourth leaders, the mysterious club dialogues of "George Cloyne," and the daily barrage of letters written from clubland, succeeds in creating the impression that the newspaper has actually been written *in* a club.

But the symbol which lies behind "Table Talk," as the name suggests, is not a club but a dinner table—a cultured, political, international dinner table of the kind that always seems to be cropping up in elder statesmen's memoirs. And here already is a rub: for part of the attraction of such dinner tables, particularly for younger people, is the fact that they no longer exist. There is a popular myth, particularly among opponents of "the Establishment," that there are several tables in S.W.1 where you will regularly find the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Editor of *The Times*, and the Prime Minister gathered on social occasions. "How is Ebor getting on, Cantuar?" one imagines, and there, under the table, should be the gossip writer.

But such tables, even if one were the kind of person to be invited, scarcely now happen. No doubt they existed much more in the age of country-house parties before the war; but now they are largely part of the myth of the Establishment. London is now far too big and professionalised a city to have many universal tables: there are literary tables, theatrical tables, legal tables and political tables. But there are very few that combine all at once—except for some specific and artificial purpose (*e.g.*, charity fund-raising appeals).

The more expensive glossy magazines, like *Vogue* and *The Queen*, whose survival depends on the cult of fashion, do what they can to foster the idea of what "Everybody's Talking About"—as *Vogue* called its gossip-column. *The Queen*, following the American *Esquire*, has cultivated the idea of *"Ins"* and *"Outs"*—the suggestion that, just round the corner, there is a sparkling circle of people who are the arbiters of fashion, and whose tastes for writers, plays, or words change as rapidly as their tastes for clothes. "It is tremendously *out* these days to have a Rolls-Royce," *The Queen's* editor, Jocelyn Stevens, explained to *Time* magazine the other day: "tremendously *in* to drive a battered Land Rover. . . ."

BUT the search for "everybody" is as hopeless as the search for the universal dinner table. It is like those London pubs to which people from the suburbs flock to see London life, and which turn out to be full of other people from the suburbs. When one sees the time and trouble that go to deciding what everybody *is* talking about, the mirage quickly disappears. Only among undergraduates, it seems, is there the tight and varied society where names can become the rage within a week, where *ins* go *out* from term to term.

The idea of "what London is talking about" is much clearer to foreign journalists than it is to any Londoner; just as a British journalist in Paris or New York has a much firmer idea of what France or America is

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"talking about" than he ever had about his own country. Reading any American reporting of the mood and fashion of London, one feels suddenly that perhaps there is a mysterious "everybody" which has been missed—a secret corner of London, full of people looking like advertisements in *Vogue*, and driving battered Land Rovers.

The Fame Machine

IT WOULD be nice to think that Britain still had its "everybody" as it had in the 18th century—a group of strong, decisive people who made up their own minds about plays, art, or politics, quite impervious to journalism or public-relations. Certainly, the power of the Press and television is nothing like as great as in America, where the publicity organisations have taken over the whole business of creating reputations, and it is accepted that success without promotion is almost unthinkable. Hence the much greater Transatlantic prestige of the journalist or public-relations man—who are doing a job without which, one sometimes suspects, the fragments of American society would disintegrate in ignorance and isolation. Journalists helped to create a coast-to-coast America by telling one coast what the other coast was thinking, and thus assuring them that they were all part of one national landmass. In Britain, journalists have been all too well aware that they have sneaked in by the back door, and that society can get along quite well without them.

But things are not what they were. The advent of television, the huge expansion of advertising and public relations, the "Americanisation" of British life, have all immensely increased the powers of the Fame Machine. Indeed, because these weapons are so powerful, and Britain is so compact a country, some Americans regard Britain as uniquely gullible. As I have been told, "You've only to get your name into Hickey, and on to the two TV networks, and you're made all over the country. But in New York alone you've got thirteen networks to capture. . . ."

Every day on my desk there is a pile of hand-outs, invitations, friendly suggestions, and brave new gimmicks come in the post, each in that peculiarly confident cocky language of the public-relations man. Their activities range from selling a milk glut to launching a society success; there are said to be three public-relations firms which undertake to keep ambitious debs in the headlines.

"We're sure you'd like to come to a wine-tasting. . . ." "You'll be interested to hear that. . . ." "The brightest, gayest party of the year will be given at. . . ." "Celebrities of stage and screen are appearing. . . ." The Potato Desk, the Cheese Bureau, the Dairy Festival, the Bacon Information Council, all send in their cheerful, expectant billets-doux: Dear Pendennis, Dear Tendennis, Dear Bendennis, Dear Diary Editor, Dear Friend, Dear Sir. . . .

As one looks through the roneoed pamphlets, it seems such a vain hope that the names they are boosting should ever be transformed into news. Yet, a few weeks later, one notices the names creeping into print, the faces appearing on the television screen, and a reputation being established, with all the trappings of Fame. The undignified, cyclostyled public-relations hand-out can appear a few days later, reproduced word-for-word as an article in the news columns of *The Times*.

The whole nature of Fame has been changed by television, which manufactures the uniform glamour which enables people to be described as nothing more than "a television personality." The magnificent illusion, that because a man appears on the screen he must have a hinterland of wisdom, of excitement, of glamour which others do not have, is strong enough to deceive, not only dons and politicians, but the very people who have helped to invent the illusion. Journalists are just as taken in by television as anyone else: they, too, take their ideas of success from Hickey and the Telly. It is true that dons, in their continual resentment against the metropolis, assume that no successful television personality can really be a scholar too; but this reaction really stems from quite excessive ideas (and hence jealousies) about the worldly power involved in walking into Television House.

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There are many other factors helping the fame industry. In his American sociological study, *The Lonely Crowd*, David Riesman describes how, as Americans have become less "inner-directed," more "other-directed" —more influenced by their contemporaries and by mass values—so the influence of the communicators, including the gossip-columnists and "inside dopesters," has steadily risen. Although Britain has retained some tribal roots, many of the characteristics of "other-direction" are very visible here. It is becoming steadily easier for newspaper or television programmes to dictate what is *out*, what is *in*; the coteries which set up their own values, heroes, and lists of *ins*, are dwindling all the time. Beats become beat by looking at American magazines; teddy-boys go wild with rock-'n'-roll because the films tell them to. As the tide of mass culture sweeps in, it is possible to discern a few groups of people who keep their own stranded islands of fame —King's College, Cambridge, perhaps, scientists, or Senior Tory politicians. But most of the old compartments are being broken down, to make one huge Hall of Fame—Dukes, Film-stars, Dons, Elopers, and all. "I forget who he is, but I know he's Famous. . . ."

In this big, loud, new hall, Slickey is beginning to come into his own. He may not have the power to create "television personalities," but he can shine in the arc-lights of that wonder-world. He can drop glittering names, and smuggle *outs* among the *ins*. He will never have the presidential prestige of Walter Winchell; no one will ever say in a hushed voice, "that's where Slickey used to sit"; but he will be able to make people eat more potatoes, buy battered Land Rovers, or stop going to the *Mermaid*:

A shoddy little talent and a sawn-off imagination
Will never be allowed to go to waste—
While we have got our earholes to the heartbeat of the nation
And our great big working finger on moronic public taste.

JOURNALISM RESCUED

The television personality is seldom interesting and is, happily (with one or two notable exceptions), short-lived. When, in a very minor way, this fate befell me, I found myself billed in newspapers as a "Television Personality." A controversial figure, I wrote even more foolishly than usual as a consequence. The only noticeable result of such a strained situation is that it becomes difficult to engage in clandestine pursuits. You may consider that this is one of the few moral justifications for the invention of this terrible thing, television.

As for newspapers seeking to be more frivolous, inconsequential, and fatuous than television, they will, it seems to me, always be beaten in that contest. As "escapism," as the soporific, the little screen, making no demands on its addicts—requiring of them only an empty stare—will always win. Compared with it, even tabloids are as ponderous as Kant, and even TIME *is as tough reading as* HAMLET.

Still, there is so much television CANNOT *do, and so much that the printed word can and always will be able to do. With all its terrific impact, television is little* LISTENED TO. *During the time that I used to appear on it fairly regularly, I never had one single instance of anyone recalling a thing I had* SAID. *Television by its nature has to move on; there are no pauses as there are in reading. It can show the news and show people; it can mount useless discussions and interviews; but it cannot explain or expound.*

Thus, it might be that the television cult will rescue journalism from the triviality and sensationalism which have so corrupted it in recent years. It might force journalism to return to an earlier and better tradition by, as it were, siphoning off the excrescences, the cheese-cake, the gossip, the melodramatic overplaying of news-stories, simply because of the unhappy chance that, in this field, television is unbeatable.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE, IN AN ADDRESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE

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James Morris

A Stranger in Dublin

WHEN I was in Dublin the other day, for the first time in my life, I took a stroll along the extended breakwater, bleached in sun and sea-wind, that protects the mouth of the Liffey from the exuberance of the Irish Sea: and passing the drab remains of Pigeon House Fort, and raising my hat to the crew of the pilot-boat, lazing off-shore, and gazing about me pleasurably to the sunny hill of Howth and the distant derricks of Dun Laoghaire, presently I saw before me, implanted across the causeway, the club-house of the Half Moon Swimming Club. Around it, on the pebbly beaches, various lonely bathers were doing things with bits of equipment, goggles and pipes and flippers, and fiddling about with small brown boxes such as might contain, in another environment, railwaymen's lunches; and immediately beside the door of the building there was a bench, facing directly down the mole, as though in judgment. Even from a distance I could see that four or five heavy pinkish figures occupied this seat, motionless but glistening in the sun, like Buddhas, and I could feel their scrutiny steadily focused upon me as I approached them down the causeway: until at last, reaching the purlieus of the club, I raised my own eyes modestly to meet those divinities face to face. Five old, fat, gleaming Dubliners looked back at me, severely: and they were all entirely nude.

I walked past them hastily towards the distant lighthouse of Poolbeg: but already their plump, gingerish faces had comforted me. The stranger in a great city, if he takes his travelling at all seriously, is constantly suppressing his preconceptions and adjusting his prejudices—"Ah, but you must remember, New York isn't America," or "That's what every blerry visitor thinks, when he's had half an hour in the Union," or "I suppose, Mr. Morris, like all our English visitors, you fondly suppose that the secret police are following you laboriously about our city?" He is always secretly hoping, though, that his preconceptions will prove true: and when they do, the warm glow of recognition is both soothing and stimulating. The five fat naked men of the Half Moon Swimming Club happily fulfilled my notions of Irish life: and in their rheumy but relentless gaze, I felt, were distilled all those essences of leisure, inconsequence, eccentricity, outrage, detachment, and beery excess that every traveller surely cherishes, when he crosses the Irish Sea for the first time, and finds himself in Dublin.

I NEEDED their reassurance badly, for many of my Dublin visions had already been shattered, by the time I took my promenade along the mole. "Dublin," the guide-books will tell you, "is the most uniformly elegant of the Western European capitals": but it certainly does not show, when you step from the airline bus into O'Connell Street, fighting off the covey of raggety small boys who want to carry your bags for you, and setting off towards the river. O'Connell Street is, so Dubliners say, without much conviction, the widest street

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in the British Isles, and is the principal thoroughfare of Dublin: but it has long since sunk into mediocrity, and smells of tobacco, old beer, sweat, and stuffiness. A succession of sad cafés lines this once-splendid thoroughfare, ringed with the hot, heavy miasma of cabbage, with a drooping commissionaire at each door, and the jangle of a juke-box, and a plate of wilting cakes in each window, and a procession of dowdy provincials, in felt feathered hats and shapeless trousers, making their way towards the viscous coffee of the Snackery. Here and there stands a huge but unglittering emporium, all balconies and flannel nighties, like a cross between Simon Artz and Alcatraz; outside the Gresham Hotel a wedding party, emanating scent and cigar-smoke, offers a brief but overwhelming impression of rhinestone finery; the streets of dull shops that run away from Nelson's Pillar look like slices of a shabbier down-town Boston; and when at last you reach the river, and feel the bold, exhilarating wind from the sea sweeping beneath its bridges, you discover no splendid monuments, no antique curiosities, no magnificent façades, but only a fusty succession of pubs, dim bookshops, and neglected auction-rooms, lining the embankments of that celebrated stream like so many dispirited spinsters.

This is the stranger's welcome to Dublin, the city of Wilde, and Shaw, and Swift, and Wellington, and Yeats, and Lady Gregory, and Joyce, and all those numberless anonymous wits who have (so legend assiduously assures us) made this the liveliest and most irreverent of cities. Dublin still has its corners of grace, relics of the Protestant Ascendancy, or tributes to the export trade: the linens, tweeds, cut-glass, and whimsy leprechauns of Grafton Street; the glorious conservatism of the Shelbourne Hotel, where the lifts ascend as stately as Cunarders, and the page-boys' cries have a peculiar hereditary intonation all their own, like the calls of immemorial reptiles; the space and splendour of the great Georgian squares, the noble symmetry of the Custom House, the calm of Trinity College ("Ah, and there's been some fellows educated there! What a clever lot of fellows!"). By and large, though, it seems to me an unconscionably shabby, down-at-heel kind of capital, as though all the festivity of our time had passed it by, and left it to grow crotchety in an attic.

This is nothing to do with its design or situation. Seldom was a city so blessed with air, light, freshness. From its broad streets (preserved by the Dublin Wide Street Commission, established in 1757) you can see the green mountains of the countryside. On its perimeter stands the magnificent Phoenix Park, as big as Hyde Park, St. James's Park, Green Park, Regent's Park, Kensington Gardens, Primrose Hill, Parliament Hill, and Hampstead Heath all put together. A perpetual vigour of the sea sweeps into the city up the Liffey, and the air is so sharp and salt, the light so pellucid, that sometimes you are reminded of spring in Venice, and sometimes of crystal sea-cities in Japan. You can indeed imagine Dublin, painted and revived, as the brightest of capitals; you can see, in the mind's eye, her lovely squares gay at midnight with satin and soda-syphons; you can almost hear the sparkling repartee of her poets and playwrights behind the heavy brocade curtains of her drawing-rooms. Dublin seems made for talent, comfort, and easy-going affluence.

But it is not there. The few squares that retain their elegance are dominated by offices and embassies. The wonderful library of Trinity is musty, cluttered, and unpolished. Shabby brown buildings degrade the grand vistas of the place. Above all, there stretches across Dublin, to an extent almost forgotten in most of western Europe, the dingy blight of poverty. "You should have seen the place ten years ago," nearly every Irishman replied, when I mentioned the slums and beggars and penury of the city: but Dublin will still dismay you, if you happen to have spent much time in the 20th century. The little ragamuffins who weave their irrepressible way, clad in rags and confidence, among the traffic of Gardiner Street

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or Mountjoy Square, or who scamper so endearingly barefoot through the shadowy aisles of the pro-Cathedral—those small Dubliners are Dickensian urchins, long vanished from the streets of London, but still the familiars of this backwater capital. The old ladies still to be found, muffled in black shawls, begging sixpences in the small hours upon the quays are, to the English visitor, images of a dead past, like coelacanths from the deep. Cracked are the window-panes, sordid the halls, broken the railings, unwashed the crones and children who hang around the front doors of Dublin's Georgian slums. Through each beautifully-proportioned window you may see a jumble of unmade bedding, brass bed-posts, tumbled clothes and broken trinkets: and the voices that echo raucously down the staircases are filtered through layers of slops and slovenliness. In the magistrates' court behind Inns Quay the crowd that huddles upon the spectators' benches might spring direct from a Cruikshank plate, so instinct are its attitudes with whiskey and dirt and threadbare comity. The public places of Dublin are mostly frowsty and peeling, and through the greenery of St. Stephen's Green, beneath the windows of the Shelbourne, there wander platoons of old men in frayed greatcoats, spindly children outgrowing their pants, down-and-outs and hairy mendicants. Dublin still has its corners of style, its fine restaurants and pampered salons: but to the English stranger it comes as a shock to realise that within the perimeters of our common islands there stands the poorest and most stagnant capital of western Europe.

For at a moment when the western world rings with wealth and material progress, Dublin seems stuck in a forlorn but stubborn rut. Ireland has become the lost soul of Europe, linked to neither of the great economic groups, without resources, without backers, without (one is almost tempted to say) purpose. The gusto of capitalism, the surge of Communism are both absent from Dublin, which is left waving a little green flag and looking towards Lourdes. Compared with this city, Reykjavik feels go-ahead, Oslo feels luxurious, even Prague feels almost hopeful. Bismarck, I am told, once suggested that as a solution to the Irish Problem the inhabitants of Ireland should change places with the inhabitants of Holland: the Dutch, with their diligence and skill, would soon make Ireland rich, and the Irish, with their genius for cheerful fecklessness, would soon let the dykes rot and drown themselves. Modern Dublin seems, at least to the stranger, to support this mystic thesis. Nearly all that is beautiful there was left behind by the English: and there are moments, as you trail through the drab back-streets of this city, when it feels as though the Irish have already opened their own flood-gates, and are slowly expiring in Guinness (on a Gradual Payments Plan, to crib the Dublin euphemism for hire purchase). They will tell you, the romantics, that the Irish actually *prefer* to be poor; that it is not their fault anyway; that the crime rate in Dublin is so low that the prisons are languishing for lack of convicts; that Ireland is the one country where the individual still successfully defies the State. Perhaps. Nevertheless there seems an element of craziness to this kind of nationhood, which sends its bored and penniless thousands to London or New York, and says its prayers in Gaelic. ("Dublin?" said my Irish charwoman, when I returned to London. "I wouldn't go back there if they were to pay my fare, really I wouldn't: Ireland's on its last legs, and I have no intention of subsiding with it.")

Nor has poverty plus independence, which sounds a heady kind of mixture, bred genius. Dublin, that old home of poetry and paradox, feels a sterile city. At the Gate Theatre, while I was there, they were performing *While the Sun Shines*. At the Abbey (playing, since its theatre was burnt, in borrowed premises) there was a half-baked comedy-drama, relying heavily upon Ould Irish Jokes, and drawing a great deal of embarrassing laughter from those tourists in the audience who still supposed that anything delivered in an Irish accent was meant to be funny. Mr. Sean O'Casey's latest play went across

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the water for its first performance. There is only one real theatre club left in Dublin, sustained in a basement by a company of young actors bursting more with charm than with talent. If there are first-class Irish novelists writing in English to-day, or first-class Irish painters painting, they are not readily apparent in Dublin, where the National Gallery is still dominated by Nathaniel Hone, and the admirable Municipal Gallery is rich in foreign moderns, but poor in what they fondly call The Irish School. *Dublin Opinion*, the *Punch* or *New Yorker* of Dublin, is, as somebody observed to me, "just the thing to read on top of a tram." Dublin contemporary architecture is difficult to assess, there being very few new buildings for architects to practise on. That old Catholic Grundy, the Irish censor, is still active. Irish humour these days seems to lean heavily towards the chamber-pot and the bathroom door, and Irish design wanders feyly through the hinterland of folk-lore, bog, tweed, and Little People. I looked and listened vainly for those dazzling Irish talkers, half-sozzled but pyrotechnic, whose exchanges I had so often heard in imagination across the bars of Dublin: even Mr. Brendan Behan had packed his bags and bottles, and gone away to England. Dublin—I hesitate to use the phrase, with so many formidable shades to read it—Dublin is dull.

THIS is perhaps because the Irish War of Independence has, with reservations, been won. It is true that the Six Counties up the road still bask blatantly in the sunshine of the Welfare State, anointed with Protestant lotions: but nowadays the squabble with Britain seems pitifully unconvincing, like the last fading grumbles of a nagging wife, when her husband has actually done the washing-up, and she is tucked up in bed in her curlers. There seems no fervency of support for the I.R.A., who still occasionally let off a bomb on the border: many Dubliners will tell you that only the obduracy of Belfast prevents a closer association between Ireland and England. Nobody seems to resent the Foreign Office's bland definition of Ireland as a "non-foreign country," or denigrates those myriad Irishmen who leave for England to work, vote, go a-soldiering, or have their tonsils out. Royal prefixes are still commonplace in Dublin, from the Royal Hibernian Society to the Powers Royal Hotel, and nobody has ever had the heart to knock down Nelson from his column. The Dublin bookshops are still full of revolutionary narratives, rather baffling to those innocent aliens who can't quite remember what the Easter Rising was, and tend to confuse a Black-and-Tan with a Mild-and-Bitter: but in general the strife is o'er, and the old quarrels are sustained artificially by middle-aged patriots of nostalgic yearnings (like that pitiful class of Englishmen, plunged in banks and solicitors' offices, who are still in fancy leading their troops through Libya, or being intermittently heroic upon the Normandy beaches).

This absence of fiery conflict unquestionably contributes to the vacuous atmosphere of Dublin. National independence has, by an unkind paradox, turned the Dubliners into provincials. In the old days this citizenry was invigorated by all the passion of frustrated liberty, keeping Dublin constantly in the world's headlines, breeding heroes, poets, martyrs, Heaven-guided orators. Now all this fury has been spent, and Dublin has retreated into the obscurity of a medium-sized city in a predominantly agricultural island, somewhere to the west of Wales. In the Municipal Gallery there is a room, specially built to house the Lane Bequest, which is entirely empty except for a portrait of Sir Hugh Lane, and which stands (quite rightly, to my mind) as a perpetual reproach to English stinginess—the Lane pictures still being held in London: but the keeper shows it to you with a friendly, tolerant, almost contemptuous smile, and the English visitor, eagerly awaiting an outburst of picturesque invective, is left kicking his heels and smiling sweetly. Nothing raises a laugh more readily in the Dublin theatres than a quip at the expense of Revolutionary heroics—"National records!" exclaimed one character in my Abbey play, "this country's *smothered* in

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national records!" Here and there you may detect, beneath the kindly dinner-table badinage of an intellectual, a buried spiky streak of Anglophobia; and in the tobacconists' there are still a few journals, rather of the crack-pot breed, declaiming against the British Occupation of the Six Counties, and lurid with atrocities. But the fizz has gone out of Irish nationalism: and the flaming Irish patriot finds that, like Othello, his occupation's gone. There is anti-climax and disillusion in the air. There can be few sillier street-signs than the one which directs the visitor, in handsome Gaelic script, towards the "Aerphort": and never did I hear a more convincing *cri-de-coeur* than that of the down-and-out whose midnight company I enjoyed during a long stroll up Grafton Street, and who told me as we parted: "I'll tell you the truth, sir, God bless you, I've lived in Ireland every minute of my life, and the more I see of the place, the less I understand its intentions."

THEY are, though, unmistakably honourable. Ireland is a very nice country, and Dublin, for all its dowdy disappointments, a very agreeable capital. This is because the Dubliners, through all their fluctuating fortunes, remain at once highly intelligent and delightfully unsophisticated. The faces of Dublin are not striking. Irish features are seldom clear-cut or arresting, and look a little blurred, as though you are seeing them through the frosted glass of a saloon (the Anglo-Irish gentry, when you observe them in their suedes, checks, and pleated skirts, look sharply chiselled in comparison); but the Dublin eye, fortunately seldom dimmed by National Health spectacles, is still irresistibly blithe, and few cities on earth give you so smiling a welcome. Hardly anybody is grumpy in Dublin. The Dubliner is often, as they say, a queer fellow, and his reactions are tempered by centuries of foreign rule and exploitation, so that he seldom openly disagrees with you, but answers your questions obliquely, as a perceptive fish might nuzzle a fly: but despite (or perhaps because of) this almost Oriental sense of camouflage and evasion, he is wonderfully fluent and entertaining. The Dublin accent remains, to the Englishman, perennially fascinating: and the Dublin vocabulary is not only vivid, but also splendidly precise, and never trails away, like the Londoner's, into a train of confused syntax and ill-remembered words. Dublin girls rely heavily upon fresh Irish charm and laughing eyes, but are undeniably pretty; Dublin offices seem to be organised with exemplary good sense; Dublin policemen, who often look like genial parodies of Irish-American cops, have managed to retain their courtesy against all comers; and nobody at all in this city will snub you, however irritating your questions, brash your criticisms, or patronising your approval.

I do not myself believe that you will find much more individualism in Dublin than you will in London, New York, or even dear old Manchester: but there is still a pleasing undercurrent of easy-going eccentricity to life in this declining city. When they take you round the ruins of the old Abbey, among the half-finished backcloths, the broken props, the blackened gilt of the stalls and the portraits of old idols—as you wander through this scorched evocation it is all too easy to feel the presence of Dublin's pungent old celebrities, glib and facile and brilliant and sometimes profound, talking the hind legs off any passing donkey, and ignoring with a fine Celtic flourish all the petty demands of convention. In the church of St. Michan, where the guide invites you to shake hands with a mummified Crusader in a vault, you may fancy a fleeting gleam of irony in your cicerone's eye, as he tells you that the organ-loft was made by the celebrated company of Grinling and Gibbons—"the harp is there, d'you see, the trumpet is there, the drum is there, the violin is there, all done to perfection, d'you see, by that well-known firm." A mordant flicker, too, crosses the salesgirl's face as she offers you a salad bowl engraved, upon demand, with your family crest—O'Boyland or O'Boyle, O'Fogarty or O'Heffernan, O'Griffy, O'Toole, or MacDonell of the Glens (there is a choice of 252).

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Sometimes, as the barman laboriously removes the froth of your draught Guinness with a wooden board, you may hear an odd snatch of conversation, from across the next partition, so wryly hilarious, so bitter with pith and aptness, that it sets you chuckling as you stand there waiting, and the barman looks up and laughs too, and removes the last drip of cream from your stout, and says proudly: "Oh, we get some comical fellows in here, you've no idea!" And if, one cold evening, you succumb to the lure of the neon sign along the quays, and descend a rickety staircase for a Pongo session, there before the familiar trestle tables of Housey-Housey will be a vision of your vicarious Dublin, wreathed in tobacco smoke, its faces at once jolly and intent, with a wealth of whiskers and brogues and old-fashioned hats and aprons and witticisms, as though the whole reputation of a city were to be seized, given a glass of beer, and bundled into the basement.

WHEN I had passed the elderly nudists at the Half Moon Swimming Club (looking surreptitiously out of the corner of my eye, to observe the expressions on their faces, which were exceedingly haughty), I thought I heard one of them speak to another, as I continued my progress, slightly shaken, along the windswept mole. I cannot be sure, but what I *think* I heard the old gentleman say was this: "That fellow there, the one with the clothes on—surely he can't be a member here, can he?"

But I walked on disregarding, for I knew it was only a bluff; and when I passed back that way, all those five fat old men had gone, leaving only the damp impression of their being upon the faded blue boards of the bench.

Armchair Shopping

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Terence Prittie

The Germans and the English

Who Is Being Beastly to Whom?

WHEN was there not a "crisis in Anglo-German relations"? I suppose the truest answer would be: before Germany was a unified State, or at least before that unified State began to feel its strength and flex its professional strong man's muscles. Even ninety years ago Bismarck was saying—on being told that England might intervene if Germany waged a preventive war on France—"If those shopkeepers come, we shall slay them with the butt-ends of our rifles." Soon afterwards, Admiral Tirpitz was declaiming against "that brutal pirate-state, England," and plenty of other Germans were preparing themselves mentally for the First World War's "Hymn of Hate" (before breakfast) and the stamping of bars of soap, match-boxes, and sausages with that blistering motto, *"Gott strafe England."*

The Kruger telegram, the Kaiser's *Daily Telegraph* interview, the Moroccan crises, Agadir, the First World War, Rapallo, Hitler's re-occupation of the Rhineland, the *Anschluss*, the rape of Czechoslovakia, and once again, war—the sorry record of Anglo-German relations has been punctuated by misunderstandings and disasters like these. It would seem, too, that national sensitivities grow stronger with time. 'Crises" in Anglo-German relations now occur at least once a year—even though they are less serious to-day than in the epoch of attempted German dominance on the European mainland and spasmodic English obstruction of German designs.

THE *author is the senior British foreign correspondent in Bonn, having reported on German affairs for the Manchester* GUARDIAN *almost continuously since the end of the war.*

1959 was a bumper year for such crises. On top of the deep resentment stirred up last autumn by Britain's reception to the Federal President, Professor Theodor Heuss, came Dr. Adenauer's outburst against the British Government in April, his anti-British broadcast to the German people and newspaper interviews in June, his censorious references to British policies in September and October, and the all-the-year-through undertone of German distrust caused by the Macmillan visit to Moscow.

It is as well, then, that a book has now been written—and by a German journalist who is now a British resident and national—which endeavours to get to the bottom of the very real problem of Anglo-German mutual animosity. In his *Zwischen Bonn und London* (Econ Verlag, Düsseldorf), H. G. Alexander, a journalist who has spent much time in Britain, has examined Anglo-German differences soberly, logically, and with welcome and frequent flashes of humour. His book is for a German readership and he has chosen an approach which seems to me to be bravely objective—he has told his own countrymen where they have gone wrong in their past appraisals of British ideas, prejudices, and susceptibilities. His purpose is plain: he believes that the Anglo-German conflict has developed into a senseless, dangerous "game" which neither country, nor Europe as a whole, can any longer afford. What he wants is "a little Christian charity" on both sides. Just as a good parent removes his own battling son by the ear, so Alexander requires the Germans to make a beginning.

THE first method which he employs to convince them is to seek to destroy the popular legends of German mythology. Thus he explains

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the pre-1914 Triple Entente in simple terms—it was German aggressiveness, and not the subterranean plotters of Germany's *"Einkreisung,"* which produced the improbable alliance of England, France, and Russia. Sir Edward Grey, again, "worked hard for peace" and was not, as so many Germans supposed, putting on a devilishly cunning act in order to hold the Entente together and attract, first Italy, and later the United States into the fold. The Treaty of Versailles, Alexander suggests, may have been tough, but what of the Treaties of Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk? How much tougher were they? And how few Germans have ever heard of them!

From the origins of Anglo-German distrust Alexander moves on to the post-war period. Here his purpose is not to justify or criticise, but just to explain. With real prescience he has focused on the story of the concentration camps (particularly Belsen) as the main factor which induced an unusual British lack of compunction about kicking an enemy when he was down. Britain, according to Alexander, deliberately pursued a "tough" policy in Germany for three years. (This is true, but it was probably Churchill who did most towards liquidating the Morgenthau Plan; and it was certainly Bevin who did most towards raising the level of German steel production and so hastening economic recovery.) Belsen certainly encouraged British toughness, and it is questionable whether Belsen will ever be forgotten in Britain. Yet no one can be so foolish as to blame the German youth of to-day for Belsen; and the youth of to-day will be the fathers and rulers of to-morrow.

The second factor which contributed towards this initially uncompromising British policy, Alexander believes, was "British fear of German economic competition." Of course, there is more than a grain of truth in this. But a whole book might be written about the confusions and complexities of Allied dismantling programmes in Germany, and it would still not be easy to conclude who (from the German point of view) were the real villains of the piece. Britain, at least, never supported the American thesis of turning Germany into cow-pastures, and British insistence on completing planned dismantlings was largely a matter of national and official pig-headedness. There were plenty of British critics of the Allied programme, and it was British newspapermen who first drew attention to the absurdity of dismantling a comb-factory and to the suspicious dislocation of the German watch-making industry. These critics were not helped by the opaqueness of the British Labour Government. Typical of this opaqueness was the Minister for Germany, Lord Pakenham, who was readily approachable on problems to do with food and religion, but who would make no constructive recommendations to his Government over dismantling.

A third British motive in post-war Germany, according to Alexander, was a clear determination not to allow Germany to drift, or to be forced into the Communist camp. Not surprisingly, the author finds it a little hard to square this concept with the antics of the inveterate "hate-the-Germans" school in Britain. How could a historian like A. J. P. Taylor, he asks, write in all seriousness that the division of Germany was "a happy stroke of circumstance"? Could he not see that this attitude of mind played straight into the hands of the Russians? Could he not see that basic points of Russian policy were the pretence that the West was responsible for keeping Germany divided, and the assumption that only the Soviet Union could be trusted by the German people because only the Soviet Union could reunite it?

The sad-but-true answer here is that democratic liberty knows few bounds. It includes the freedom to be plainly irresponsible. Blandly and perversely, A. J. P. Taylor has stated that Germany can be "written-off," that East and West Germans can be left to get on with one another as best they may, and that Germans deserve no scrap of sympathy. In the view of many, Mr. Khrushchev could have no better unpaid publicity-agent; yet Alexander will not reproach a man whom he must regard as an incurable enemy of Germany. He writes that however much the views of someone like Mr. Taylor must pain Germans, they should be given "due consideration." It is not enough to condemn destructive views; they must be analysed and assessed, if only at their destructive value. There is something frightening about this adoption towards an Englishman of an attitude so carefully compounded of the charitable and the clinical.

THE main purpose of Alexander's narrative is to lead up to last autumn's visit to Britain of President Heuss. That visit produced the worst impressions in Germany. West German papers gave much space to the bitter jibes of the Beaverbrook Press and of the *Daily Mirror*, far less to the comments of the *Observer*,

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Manchester Guardian, Daily Telegraph. Grave offence was caused because the *Times* did not devote a leader to the visit of a Head of State —presumably because he was a German. Germans were scandalised by the pictures of Oxford undergraduates standing with hands in pockets as President Heuss walked past, by asinine protests in Britain to Heuss' gift to Coventry Cathedral (and to the Queen's references to her German ancestry), and by the depressing dispatches of the *Sonderkorrespondenten* of German newspapers who had been sent to London.

With wisdom and moderation, Alexander has pointed out that these special correspondents did not understand British precedents, traditions, habits; that the President was treated with personal courtesy wherever he went; that there were no hostile demonstrations; and that security arrangements could be reduced to nil. Alexander maintains that Germans, once again, accepted as gospel-truth newspaper reports written without a grain of understanding or humour. He is probably right. As far as humour goes, there is the story of the British Embassy official in Bonn who was assailed for the *n*th time by a German civil servant on the subject of the Oxford undergraduates. "I don't think," he said to the German, "that you know the *real* reason why they had their hands in their pockets."

"No?" said the German. "Perhaps you will tell me."

"You see," said the Englishman, "since the war a rather different type of person has gone to the Universities. Why, seventy-five per cent of the undergraduates are State-aided! They are poor, too poor to afford braces."

The German cogitated. "Well, that makes things a bit better," he said. "But I still don't think much of those young chaps. A pair of braces wouldn't have cost much. . . ."

It is a somewhat ludicrous reflection that the Heuss visit is still recalled with rancour in Germany to-day. But at least it served to focus attention on the complexes, fixations, and highly-charged emotions underlying Anglo-German relations. It served, too, to stress one special aspect of those relations—I mean the attitude towards Britain of the man who has done most to build up and consolidate post-war German democracy, Dr. Adenauer.

IT IS a plain fact, with nothing derogatory about it, that the German community is still much more affected by the opinions of a single man than the British community could ever be. Dr. Adenauer's influence is immense. It is all the more unfortunate that Dr. Adenauer—and it is best to be blunt about this—does not like the British, and never will like them. The reasons for this dislike are mostly well known; yet it would be as well to recapitulate them.

Dr. Adenauer had his first brush with the British in 1919, when he was Lord Mayor of Cologne and a jack-in-office told him that German civilians should take their hats off to British officers on the streets. He had a second skirmish in 1945, when an equally inept British official sacked him from the Mayoralty.* Soon afterwards he was full of complaints against the British, on the grounds that the Labour Government was filling all key posts in education, the Press, and radio with German Social Democrats.

Dr. Adenauer blamed the British, rather than the French, for the breakdown of the European Defence Community. He could see that fiasco only in terms of British waywardness and indecision, not of natural French reluctance to bind herself too tightly to the power against whom she had fought three bloody wars in eighty years. Dr. Adenauer blamed the British because progress towards a fully-fledged European political community slowed down—for this was his dearest dream and the cure he prescribed for latent German nationalism. He blamed the British for not explicitly recognising how much better Germany was doing in every way—as a democracy, as a political partner, military ally, and a free and fair trader.

Recently I turned up a note of an interview which Dr. Adenauer gave me ten years ago. In it he made two references to Britain. The first was:

> I would be glad if the British Government and people would accept the facts that England is a European Power, that her history is bound up with that of Western Europe, and that she is in duty bound to play her part in European development.

The second reference was:

> I must add that the British Government has openly supported the Social Democrats in their zone of occupation. Its representatives have influenced the North-West German radio, the news-agencies, and the military newspaper *Die*

* "I have been sacked twice," Adenauer is never tired of repeating, "once by the British and once by the Nazis."

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Welt, which has been given special advantages and which pursues a definitely Socialist policy.

Dr. Adenauer had not changed those views in 1959, ten years later. In April, according to the New York *Times*, he declared that Britain had no right to seek the leadership of the European nations. (This was an oblique reference to the Macmillan visit to Moscow.) In June he openly rejected Mr. Macmillan's plans for a zone of limited and equalised armaments in Europe —which he later admitted he had not studied— and gave a series of interviews to American and French newspapers in which he advised Mr. Macmillan to "give up some of his ideas" and warned him that he was isolating Britain from the rest of Europe.

In September he was at it again, accusing first Macmillan and then the Conservative Party of supporting the Polish "Rapacki Plan." Even ten days before the General Election he was telling his Christian Democratic Party that all British plans for a zone of limited armaments would be dropped "as soon as their election is over." The implication was plain: it was all an election-stunt.

Undoubtedly Dr. Adenauer was personally wronged by the British in 1919 and 1945; this has been admitted freely, and often. He may even have had the right to feel insulted when he was given *Liebfraumilch* (and this to one of the Rhineland's wine connoisseurs) to drink at a post-war London banquet. His complaints against the Labour Government were less justified. It was natural that British Socialists should turn to German Social Democrats. They could be trusted, for their support of democracy had been constant (whereas the members of Dr. Adenauer's own Catholic Centre Party had voted to a man for the "Enabling Act" which gave Hitler the powers of a dictator). As for the British failure "to lead Europe," Britain was terribly weary in 1945, and for years afterwards. This is no excuse, only an explanation for her lack of activity in Europe. There she failed to decide on a clearly-defined rôle; and the Germans are not the only Europeans who cannot understand this.

Out of Britain's failure to become "a complete European" have sprung German doubts of British good faith. But there were supplementary reasons. Dr. Adenauer's anti-British bias was only one of them. Another was the lively memory of the Munich Agreement: if Britain could sell the pass to one dictator, Germans asked, why should she not do so again? This doubt was nurtured in the Federal Cabinet by the confidential circulation last December of a British Foreign Office memorandum which set out reasons for a later recognition of the East German Republic. The old German belief that British diplomats were immensely cunning people, full of dark designs camouflaged by speech impediments, reasserted itself. The British were blamed for the suggestion being aired that the East Germans could be officially recognised on the Berlin *Autobahn* as "the agents of the Russians." They were blamed for wearisome arguments over the relative advantages of the European Common Market and the Free Trade Zone. Alexander, for one, believes that the British were jealous of the Bonn-Paris axis, and of the stolid and sometimes harrowing *mariage de convenance* which seemed to be supplanting the fifty-year-old Anglo-French romantic attachment. And yet, was it not precisely the British who had told the Germans to get on better with their French neighbours? Once again, in Dr. Adenauer's eyes at any rate, the British appeared to be impeding European progress.

ALEXANDER'S book is timely, and in his final chapter he returns to his theme of the sheer necessity of a better Anglo-German understanding. It is a necessity for its own sake, for two nations so closely linked by blood and tradition should have learned by now to get on with each other. It is a necessity for Europe, for the balance of forces in the world. Only an industrious, inwardly united Europe can help to bring a relaxation of tension between two great Powers which regard every boundary between the Communist and Western-democratic worlds as their own front-line.

It is quite another question how Germans and English are to get on better in the future. Alexander has given some ideas to his former countrymen of their misunderstandings of the English; it is only fair that someone should try to do the same thing in reverse.

First, an introductory thought. The Government of Western Germany is essentially friendly towards Britain, and Dr. Adenauer's foibles are strictly his personal affair. Their influence on German thinking will disappear when Dr. Adenauer ceases to be Chancellor—for it is impossible to visualise him changing his mind. German intellect—represented by men of letters, the arts, the journalists—is mainly friendly towards Britain. One exception is provided by

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those woolly-minded senior historians who were brought-up in the tradition of distrust of all things English; another is offered by the right-wing Press. Complexes and misunderstandings about the British are most frequent among "thinking" Germans; for they are most frustrated by the present state of Anglo-German relations. It is a human tendency to blame "the other side."

By its usual impartiality (issues like "trade competition" and "occupation costs" were inevitable exceptions), the West German Press has made it much easier for the man-in-the-street to be friendly towards Britain. He had very little tendency, after the deafening megaphone of Nazi propaganda was removed, to be anti-British. Lacking British insularity and surrounded by foreign neighbours, he was perfectly ready to accept an Englishman at face value, to live in a West-European world of "good neighbours."

The fruitful personal contacts which have sprung up between English and Germans since the war are legion. Best of all are those between the youth of both countries, a fellowship based on common interests, lacks, worries. (The people of South Shields, too, might be surprised to know with what warmth and affection the Lord Mayor of Wuppertal praises their hospitality, their sensibility, even their town-planning.) Most Englishmen living in Germany meet only with politeness and helpfulness. Desire for friendship is there, too, just beneath the surface-film of shyness, a shyness which Germans do not feel to the same extent towards the peoples of other countries.

Why should they feel shy towards the British? They are frightened by what they regard as British sarcasm and conceit. Germans are not much given to affectations. That is why they are disconcerted by the British Parliamentarian's cultivated stutter, by the daunting dropsy of the Oxford accent, by that high-pitched toneless "B.B.C. voice," barren of emotion, whimsical, worrying. English sarcasm can be as disturbing as the hyper-educated English voice; it never occurs to simple-minded people that it may even be well-meant. The "English manner," the product of reticence rather than mannerlessness, can be equally discomforting. A German friend recently spoke to me of "your English diplomats—with their polite masklike faces and their cold eyes of a fish. . . ." It would be hard to convince him that they might be jolly good fellows.

The Germans feel shy towards the British because of their apparent indifference. Germans generally want to be appreciated, admired, at least liked. I have never met in Germany the professional curmudgeon so beloved in Britain. It is alarming for Germans that most Englishmen do not appear to care at all about other people, or even about what other people think of them. For Germans with what they consider to be "a position in the community" spend much time bolstering their egos. (Typical are the businessmen who display their engagement books, with a pathetic pride, merely in order to show how well-filled they are.) Germans, again, would like to be proud of their blood-relationship with the British. But that is not easy, when blood-relationship is something that the British never refer to, and have chosen to forget.*

The Germans feel shy towards the British because of their own deep-rooted belief in the written word. This is what makes the bitter and occasionally unfair attacks of British newspapers really hurt. Forty years ago the diplomat Kiderlen-Waechter wrote that "a four-month Press campaign would convince the German people of any idiocy." The average German cannot understand how the average Englishman can take everything he reads with a pinch of salt, and a sly chuckle. He resents the sly chuckle, when the cause of it is a vitriolic article in one of the London newspapers which delights in "German-baiting." To him the operative fact is that the circulations of these newspapers add up to several million; his assumption is that several million Englishmen are basically anti-German. It is wrong to suppose that only simple-minded Germans think this way; Dr. Adenauer does too.

Dog may not eat dog, and I have no desire to give myself indigestion. But one example of unfaithful reporting of German views was supplied by a London newspaper in June. The current crisis in Anglo-German relations, it wrote, should not be put at Adenauer's door; on the contrary, it was the German people as a whole that would never lose an opportunity of indulging its ingrained anti-Britishness. Any

* "So much water has since flowed under the bridge," wrote an almost bewildered *Times* correspondent (August 19th, 1959), straining at his resources of mind and historical memory, "that it always requires a considerable effort of the imagination to remember that Great Britain and Hanover once shared the same monarch."

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observant Englishman living in Germany at the time knew that this was mischievous nonsense. The German people "as a whole" did not know what the crisis was about. Dr. Adenauer had provoked it personally.

It is, I am afraid, undeniable that some British newspapers take a perverted pleasure in literally standing truth on its head where Germany is concerned. It is hard to find counterparts in Western Germany. Nor is it unnatural that distortion of the truth should upset Germans, rendered ultra-sensitive by the shame and spiritual uncertainty which sprang from the Nazi era. "We have plenty of failings," one German told me who knows England well. "But the British adopt the prissy authority of a nursery-governess too often. Now, those of us who resented the British nursery-governess may have thought of her as elderly, dessicated, but—righteous. After Suez that changed. The notion of an unattractive spinster, irretrievably fallen, is too ridiculous. . . ."

An Englishman would be amazed if he were told that the German values his friendship more than that of any other foreigner. Sentiment and blood-relationship play their part. So does German envy of English independence of mind and apparently thick skin. Plenty of Germans have a whole vocabulary of English words which they use while talking their own language. Plenty more buy English clothes, ape English manners, habits. One particular German whom I know buys tweeds and neckties in London, has learned to smoke a briar pipe, drink port, play golf. He even bought a bowler-hat, but admitted that it did not suit him. I have yet to meet an Englishman who tries to sound, look, and behave like a German.

Alexander's book, *Zwischen Bonn und London*, should have considerable effect in Germany, for Germans worry greatly about their attitudes towards other peoples and the consequences of their behaviour. (The German football fans who watched their side win the World Cup five years ago were fiercely criticised by the West German Press for carousing and singing all the way home from Switzerland.) And they really do need encouragement. "We shall be a real community again," Professor Heuss said to me before leaving for London, "when other peoples help us to make a pleasure out of our industriousness."

An Englishman cannot emulate Alexander's achievement, for he will founder on the myriad coral reefs of English reservation, indifference, or ingrained sense of superiority. And he may find it hard to rid himself of the nagging reflection that Britain's own position as a world-power has been irretrievably damaged by two world wars, which Germans help to provoke. It *is* still a strain for an Englishman to treat Germany's problems with understanding, to be as truthful and as sympathetic about the Germans as possible. The problems of Anglo-German relations will not, in any case, be solved in a hurry. But solved they must be.

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Willard Thorp

The Well of English, Now Defiled

A Report on "No-English" in America

WHEN Edmund Spenser paused for a moment in the fourth book of his Faerie Queen to refer reverently to an earlier poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, as that "well of English undefiled," he was implying, I gather, that the English of his own day had become poisoned with ink-horn terms and Italianate expressions. This allusion ought to comfort one in a discussion of the evidences of defilement in English prose to-day (and more particularly as English teachers see them in the writing we receive from our students). But I am not much comforted, because Spenser and fifty other influential writers of Elizabethan England were busy removing the poison from the well. I am not sure we can again accomplish this kind of sanitary engineering. By 1959 the incidence of poison in the well may have passed the safety mark.

I have been red-pencilling student papers for a good many years and I ought by now to have become resigned or cynical. But I am not, and the reason for my present concern is a sinister change in the kind of writing we have lately been getting. It used to be that we could do our duty and even bring about reforms by sprinkling in the margins of themes those cabalistic signs *"coh."* (for coherence), *"sp."* (for spelling), and *"gr."* (for grammar). But these traditional correctives will no longer serve. We are now too often presented with a kind of prose—if that is the name for it—which is inviolable. A red-pencil used against it becomes as impotent as a sword in a folk-tale which has had a spell put on it. Sometimes this prose resembles remotely a bad translation from a foreign language. Sometimes it suggests that the writer has squeezed together under pressure the jagged ends of several assorted ideas. The only name I have for this monstrosity is No-ENGLISH.

The writer of No-English is unconscious of the fact that his pages resembles nothing else under the sun. If you say to him, "This is not English. You must tear this up and try again," he will answer plaintively: "But you know what I *mean*, don't you?" He will be indignant if you reply, "I can *guess*, but only because I know what you are supposed to mean."

Let me cite a few choice samples of No-English. These come, alas, from examination papers in my course in American literature.

> A change from the optimastic view of the individual man as put forth in trancendentic philosophy to the pessimistic view of man kind frought with invalide morals living a superficial life with no direction such as T. S. Eliot flitting bug-eyed from Antwerp to Brussels to London.

> He was a man who had dispared to the nature of a man and although he had these tendencies of subjection he soon gained aspirations and broke away from the school of disparants and strove on his own beliefs.

> When Twain was writing *Huckleberry Finn* he decided to implement the voyage as a cohesive catalyst. Twain used a general local. Faulkner has a restrictive local, and Thoreau wrote for everybody in the universal.

> Huck Finn sets out in a cimilar direction, away from society. He also floats on the sea of life

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and has periodic relations with the surrounding society. The Grangerfords put Huck up, for instance, and promptly acquaint him with social disorganization and bitterness.

The American ideal seemed to hang void in the twenties, a shameful thing because Americans must forage ahead. Eliot was not the gung-ho American as Whitman. Whitman was one of the best examples of this "nature into thought" angle.

To one who cares about the well-forged instrument by which those who use English communicate with one another there are, I submit, some very alarming symptoms of decay and defilement in these passages of No-English. Listened to with half an ear they sound impressive, authoritative, and even powerful. Though their authors were composing complete nonsense, they put down these jumbled words with the self-assurance of an advertising copy-writer or an editor of *Time*.

WHY is the tide of No-English flooding in with such power that we cannot stand against it?

First in importance is the influence of officialese. This is the age of the official statement from the government, of communiqués, of press releases from public relations officers. All writing of this sort must sound impressive and authoritative, for it is composed to be believed in without dissent.

Here is a prime example of officialese (which originated, I am happy to say, not in America but England):

It will be apparent that the draining away of senior experienced men will be of such proportions for some years to come as to constitute a serious factor to be contended with in providing for the adequate staffing of State departments. The difficulty in this respect is aggravated by the expansion of governmental activities which has been a feature during the last few years, and which seems likely to persist for some time. This expansion has already imposed considerable strain upon the personnel of the public service and, coupled with the progressive wastage in the ranks of the senior officers to which reference has been made, tends to produce conditions which, on occasion, border on the acute. The Commission is giving its particular attention to the problems contained in and engendered by the circumstances already present and those which it is anticipated will develop in future.

These fourteen lines of "twisted, pretentious, long-winded and down-at-heel" officialese, can, with a little labour, be shortened to six lines.* You can always condense officialese by about two-thirds; this is one of the ways you recognise it.

So many senior and experienced officers will leave the service during the next few years that State departments will be short of staff; and the difficulties this will cause will be aggravated if, as seems possible, the State's activities continue to expand. The Commission is giving this matter attention.

More often than not the young are trying to write officialese. And why not? This is the way very important people in our society "reveal" or "announce" what are supposed to be matters of life-or-death. This is the interminable voice of the age—or one of its voices.

The evident desire of the writers of No-English to pack power into their prose can, I think, be traced to another defiler of the well of English. Almost every popular magazine nowadays is likely to be written in a hot-rod style which bursts with energy in every sentence. Authors who wish to sell their wares to *Time*, *Look*, and *Life*, must write in a 500-horsepower style. And their editors, as well, seem to live in constant fear that if they take the foot off the accelerator the reader will drop off to sleep between sentences or, bored and indifferent, turn on the television set.

Two qualities of *Time*-style exert an especially subtle influence. The supercharged *Time*- (or *Newsweek*-) sentence teaches the student that his prose should never be quiet. It must always shock with the hot-foot. One cannot imagine, for instance, *Time*'s printing one of the calm and witty essays of E. B. White; it would be as much out of place as a preacher at a jitterbug contest.

The souped-up article also teaches the student-reader that certain words are absolute as definitions of attributes of mind and body.

* This example of officialese and the condensation of it I have borrowed from Eric Partridge and John W. Clark, *British and American English Since 1900* (1951), p. 44.

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No variations or gradations are possible and so none need be sought. Take, for instance, one of *Time*'s pet words—"paunchy." As one whose paunchiness is increasingly distressful to him, I resent this word's invariability. There was a time when I had a little professorial pot; later I was "stout" (as we used to say, in a politer era); then I became, I suppose, definitely pot-bellied. But in *Time*'s view I have always been paunchy; there is no need for other words to describe my long struggle with the flesh, my triumphs and my eventual defeat. Consider another of *Time*'s favourites—"bug-eyed." Gone are the possibilities of playing with such fine old words as startled, a-feared, aghast, agog, spellbound, open-mouthed, thunderstruck. Nor is there any way of knowing whether the man affected with bug-eyedness inherited his condition or is a hyperthyroid case or is exophthalmic. He is just "bug-eyed"—that's all.

Our Masters

It has been my good fortune to see, at different times, and often over a period of years, what goes on in the grammar school, the training college for elementary teachers, the adult class, and technical schools in all parts of the country, the department of education in an English university, and the department of Rhetoric and English Literature in a Scottish university.

And this experience has convinced me that a large proportion of the boys and girls leave the secondary school to face the world unable either to read aloud intelligibly or (more important, both commercially and politically) to express themselves in writing clearly, concisely, and coherently on any subject whatever. More shocking was it to discover when I became head of a university department of education, which accepted first or second class honours graduates, that some fifty per cent of these could neither read without stumbling nor write good English....

It is nonsense to object that English composition is a difficult subject to teach. I can recall an occasion when it took me five minutes to show a second class history man from Cambridge what a metaphor was and how to handle one, if he must—and I think he never forgot it. Historians, indeed, seem peculiarly unskilful in the use of metaphor....

But let me hasten to my conclusion, which is: The evil I speak of is dangerous, politically very dangerous. For the only way to think clearly is to learn to express oneself clearly in speech under discipline. In the schools and universities we are educating our masters. And if our masters are not taught to think, that way lies tyranny.

J. DOVER WILSON,
in *The Times*.

MUCH more to be feared than the poison vials of officialese or of *Time* is the expensively distilled poison of advertising-style. Students cannot escape it—nor can we. As the poet Karl Shapiro put it in his poem, "Drug Store":

And every nook and cranny of the flesh
Is spoken to by packages with wiles.
"Buy me, buy me," they whimper and cajole;
The hectic range of lipstick pouts,
Revealing the wicked and the simple mouth.

One of the most insidious things about advertising-style is that it burns up the language at a furious rate because there is so much oxygen in it. The new Plymouth, the ad-man says, is *newest, most modern* of the low-price three. Also *biggest*. Its Power-Flow 117 motor is *brilliant*. Its Power-Flite no-clutch transmission is the *finest made*. The next ad-writer for Plymouth is going to find ashes all over his cubicle. What can he dig out of the dictionary which is newer than "newest," bigger than "biggest," higher than "highest horsepower in the field?"

Consider the consumption of debased advertising metaphors which goes on in one issue of *Look* or *Life*. We note that "a new day has dawned for the car owners of America." Can this startling statement mean that the atomic-powered automobile has arrived? Not at all. Firestone is merely marketing a new tyre. And how are we to "open the door on to-morrow?" By such exciting experiences as getting married? having a baby? a plane trip to Europe? Certainly not. That "door on to-morrow" will open if you make an itsy-bitsy deposit on a Dodge. And what is this on the next page?—"Like all

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great ideas, this one's slightly marvellous—yet so simple." Can it be we are about to hear something of the order of magnitude of the second law of thermo-dynamics or Leibnitz's theory of the monads? We are not so easily fooled. We know instinctively, after years of indoctrination, that this great idea will prove, alas, to be only Sta-Flat's creation of a new girdle, with extra strength where you need it most ("midriff, waist, tummy").

THERE is another defiler of modern prose whose poisoning is carried out under the cover of darkness. I find it difficult to identify him. Professor John Clark declares the culprit to be the second-rate newspaper reporter. I am not sure he is the chief offender; but I am certain that some person or persons unknown have put over on us lately a most peculiar, very limited vocabulary which serves, unfortunately, to cover every situation in modern life. In listing these words—about forty in number—Professor Clark notes that "if an historical novelist of fifty or a hundred years from now should wish to give his readers a fairly realistic illusion of the flavour of everyday American English of the 1950's, he could adopt no more economical means than to sprinkle his dialogue with these expressions."

To prove to myself how constantly these words turn up and how unthinkingly we ourselves resort to them, I used every one of them in a little descriptive scene which took less than ten minutes to compose, so easily did these words fall into place.

> A teen-ager dropped into my office to-day, much worried about his inferiority complex and anxious to adjust. He seemed to think I was a sincere-type professor and had some know-how in inter-personal relations. He said there was a campus-inspired rumour that I am good at human engineering and so thought he'd contact me and get a few constructive angles. First I tried to fit him into some frame of reference and then I processed him by screening him with some questions, and so got the overall picture. (I discovered, by the way, that his mother is a low-grade home-maker.) I then briefed him on the need for grasping our most unique set-up here and seeing how we are geared for modern living. Next I made him the proposition that he be less negative, more relaxed, and mix with a few of the outstanding youth at the top-flight level of our student body. He would be sure, I said, to find them like-minded, percentagewise. When we finished off, he thanked me for our little streamlined get-together and said he would try to integrate better. I found the experience so educational that I think I'll author an article about it after I've researched the matter further.

Some of the offensive expressions are hand-me-downs from pseudo-scientific writing; some derive from the writing of sociologists and psychologists; some emanate from the sales-conference and the business convention. Several reveal the codified anxieties of modern life, while others are the slogans of "positive thinking" which are supposed to cure these anxieties. Because these expressions make up an important part of the vocabulary of his time, the modern student is compelled to use them. But while this fictional professor was having his cosy little streamlined interview with this hypothetical student, neither of them was a human being—a person, as Shakespeare once said, with hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with food, subject to diseases, warmed and cooled with winter and summer. The student was an intelligence test to be taken and scored; the professor was a machine to grind out medians, percentiles, and normal distribution curves.

THERE is one predicament in our present kind of collegiate education which, I am convinced, confuses the student who desires to write good English, which may, indeed, lead him to believe that there is no necessity for trying to write in the great tradition of English prose. Because the fields of learning now share very little common ground, they (and we) no longer possess a common language. The historian cannot understand the equations of the physicist and the physicist cannot understand the new vocabulary developed by the sociologist. The professor of literature who lectures about "levels of meaning," the "texture and tension of poetry," the wonderful "ambiguities" in Melville's prose, and the "personal symbolism" in the poetry of Robert Frost, opens the eyes but not the ears of his colleague in chemistry who had no idea literature was *that* difficult.

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This impenetrability of our particular subjects to the uninitiated does not worry us—as professors—to any great extent. We go our separate ways, happy in our isolation. We rejoice in our own jargon. We suppose that our colleagues in other fields understand.

But I have begun to notice lately that our better students take an unholy pride in the vocabularies they encounter as they move through their academic day. Imagine what the impact of specialised subjects and the vocabularies by which they are presented may be on a conscientious young man who really wishes to comprehend what his lecturers, hour after hour, are telling him. At 8.30 in his physics class he hears this:

> BARRIER DESIGN
>
> At atmospheric pressure the mean free path of a molecule is of the order of a ten-thousandth of a millimeter or one-tenth of a micron. To ensure true "diffusive" flow of the gas, the diameter of the myriad holes in the barrier must be less than one-tenth the mean free path. Therefore the barrier material must have almost no holes which are appreciably larger than 0.01 micron (4×10^{-7} inch), but must have billions of holes of this size or smaller. These holes must not enlarge or plug up as the result of direct corrosion or dust coming from corrosion elsewhere in the system. The barrier must be able to withstand a pressure "head" of one atmosphere.

At 9.30 our young man is in his place in his music class in Elementary Harmony. His professor has been talking about triads in minor keys. After the late-comers have got to their seats he begins:

> When the dominant and sub-mediant triads (V and VI) are connected in the minor mode, the voices have to move along certain *fixed* lines in order to avoid consecutive 5ths and octaves and the augmented 2nd. The leading-tone always ascends to the tonic (or descends from it). Two of the upper voices must move in contrary motion to the bass, and the *3rd is always to be doubled* in the triad on the sixth degree, *in four-part writing.*

Our earnest friend has a much-needed coke in the Student Centre at 10.30 but at 11.30 he is in the Psychology building.

> When two simple stimuli are combined in some total perception, the hedonic tone of the resultant depends upon the sum of the hedonic tones of the two stimuli. We must, however, limit this principle in two ways. (*a*) It holds only when it can operate without interference by some of the other hedonic laws [I have explained]. (*b*) It holds only when the relative importances of the different constituents in the sum are determined and taken into account.

After a breather at lunch (and fifteen minutes at the pool-table) he is back in place at 1.30, listening to the Professor of Religion on the relations between mysticism and magic.

> To the two dogmas of the "Astral Light" or universal agent and the "power of the will" there is to be added a third: the doctrine of Analogy, or implicit correspondence between appearance and reality, the microcosm of man and the macrocosm of the universe, the seen and the unseen worlds. In this, occultism finds the basis of all its transcendental speculations. *Quod superius sicut quod inferius*—the first words of that Emerald Table which was once attributed to Hermes Trismegistus himself—is an axiom which must be agreeable to all Platonists.*

Finally, at 2.30, the last lecture of the day. The course is American Literature, and the professor is talking about the pamphleteers of the American Revolution. He does up Tom Paine neatly in the last ten minutes of the hour and concludes by saying: "The opening paragraph of Paine's great propaganda pamphlet, 'The Crisis,' which put heart into Washington's ragged little army in December, 1776, and turned the fortunes of war in our favour, contains one of the most eloquent passages of prose written in the 18th century."

> These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon

* These four quotations have been cribbed, verbatim, from: Henry De-Wolf Smyth, *Atomic Energy for Military Purposes* (Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 177; Arthur Foote and Walter R. Spalding, *Modern Harmony* (Schmidt Co., 1924), p. 41; Baring, Langfeld, and Weld, *Psychology, A Factual Textbook* (Wiley and Sons, 1935), pp. 376–377); and Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Dutton, 1926), p. 191.

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its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

WHAT does our young man think of this, if he can think at all, after the day's barrage of special terms and concepts? "It's eloquent, so what?" Who is there to tell him that although it is important to know all he has learned during the day, and that the beginning of wisdom is the certitude of fact, nevertheless there is something beyond fact which is of the utmost importance. If, in his pride of knowledge, he refuses to learn how to communicate his knowledge, his ideas, and his aspirations, in language that is simple, sensuous, passionate, direct, honest, precise, varied, strong though quiet, *and* eloquent, he will never bring men to his way of thinking. He will have condemned himself to the prison of the public relations officer, or the life of the Madison Avenue adman, or to the drudgery, without the final reward, of the narrow specialist-scholar. He deserves to win a better fate. But who among us is ready to speak sternly to him, our pride and our hope, though he still writes No-English?

Half Truth from Cape Town

Between a smoking fire and a tolling bell
When I was young and at home I could not tell
What problems roosting ten miles to the east
Waited like vultures in their gantried nest
Till Prod should tumble Papish in the river.
I could not tell. The bell went on for ever.

Now through the swinging doors of the decades I
Confront a waste of tarmac, a roaring sky;
The Southern Cross supplants the Useful Plough—
But where are Livingstone and his Lion now?
That cross was raised to mark this safe hotel
Between the goldmines and the padded cell.

In each glib airport between here and you
As the loudspeaker speaks the ants pour through,
Some going north into their past and some
South to this future that may never come,
But all engrossed to that same point that good
Ants would die to get to if they could.

So here I am, with Devil's Peak above,
Between a smoking fire and a calling dove,
Its voice like a crazy clock that every ten
Minutes runs down, so must be wound again;
And who is all but come or all but gone
I cannot tell. The dove goes on, goes on.

Louis MacNeice

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Jacob Burckhardt

By C. V. Wedgwood

IN THE sixty years since his death the reputation of Jacob Burckhardt has steadily grown. The unpretentious scholar who always denied that he was a philosopher, who refused the influential chair of history at Berlin preferring to stay in his native Basle, who was pleased to be known simply as *"ce vieux monsieur au portefeuille"* from his habit of carrying an enormous folder of photographs to illustrate his lectures—he would have been surprised and amused, had he foreseen the posthumous expansion of his fame. He might also have been relieved, for he was a deeply conscientious man and was at times troubled lest he should be thought not to have made the best use of his time and talents.

At the age of forty he was already complaining that life was too short for him to read all the sources and assimilate all the ideas necessary to his work. Twenty-five years later he wrote to his disciple Heinrich Wölfflin: "Life is a bad business; it is much too short to complete anything worth while. . . ." He published only two historical works of major importance, *The Age of Constantine* and *The Civilisation of the Renaissance*, though his most widely used book in his lifetime was his *Cicerone*, a handbook to works of art in Italy, which he wrote (so he said) with youthful *insouciance* unaware of the intense seriousness with which it would be used, analysed, re-issued and revised by students and scholars of art history. He had originally intended to link *Constantine* to the *Renaissance* with a series of studies that would demonstrate the cultural history of Europe during the disintegration of the Roman Empire and through the Middle Ages. But after he became Professor at Basle in 1858 he found the demands of lecturing and teaching so great as gradually to absorb all his time.

He preferred to communicate his ideas directly to an audience, rather than through books. He may also have felt, reasonably enough since his books, with the exception of the *Cicerone*, had more reputation than sale, that by lecturing between ten and twelve hours a week he would give his knowledge and his ideas to a larger and more receptive public. He concentrated all the powers of his intellect on the preparation of his lectures, but he believed in spontaneous delivery and wrote down very little —scarcely more than a skeleton. He would develop a subject anew for each audience, thinking it through again as he spoke and drawing freely on his huge stores of knowledge for examples and illustrations, which he set forth in vivid and racy language. Sometimes the parenthetical structure of his thought (one idea was apt to suggest another to him) made it hard for the slower-witted to follow him. But to the intelligent his lectures were an unfailing spring of illumination and knowledge. "He shook wisdom from his sleeves," one student later wrote. For a long generation his influence, carried more by the spoken word, radiated from his lecture-room in Basle. But spoken words leave nothing for posterity, so he bequeathed his lecture notes and unpublished manuscripts to his nephew, not thinking so much of fame as merely of forestalling criticism: these voluminous papers would prove that he had always been industrious.

FROM these notes and manuscripts several books have been derived since his death in 1897. These include the extraordinarily fresh and enthusiastic *Recollections of Rubens*, a study done in his seventies which reads like the eager work of a young man. Burckhardt's intense pleasure in Rubens is significant, for he admired in him a comprehensive genius who gathered into a single harmonious vision the abundance, vigour, and colour of the entire living world. What Rubens was to painting Burckhardt

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would have wished to be for history—or, since his natural modesty would hardly have let him put such an idea into words, it would be more true to say that the paintings of Rubens embodied in visual form the variety, the harmony, and the objective acceptance of life which were his ideal for the historian.

The most important works published since his death are the great three-volume *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (1898; no English translation) and *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (1905; later revised edition, 1941; English translation, *Reflections on History*, 1943). On these books, and the *Civilisation of the Renaissance*, his fame rests, although it has been steadily enhanced by the publication of his letters which reveal the acuteness of his perceptions and the warmth and charm of his character.

The attempt to present him to posterity not only as an original and comprehensive historical thinker, but also as a philosopher and seer, began with the publication of the *Reflections on History*, was intensified by the various appraisals of his work made for the centenary of his birth, in 1918, and has swollen to formidable proportions since the revised issue of the *Reflections* in 1941. The date is significant for in the forties of this century a 19th-century historian who had foreseen world wars and dictatorships as Burckhardt foresaw them aroused something more than academic interest. The tone of the *Reflections on History* is gloomily prophetic. Some of his letters are even more explicit and set forth very clearly the dangers inherent in the unthinking worship of democracy and progress:

> The great harm was begun in the last century, mainly through Rousseau, with his doctrine of the goodness of human nature. Out of this plebs and educated alike distilled the doctrine of the golden age that was to come quite infallibly, provided people were left alone. The result . . . was the complete disintegration of the idea of authority in the heads of mortals, whereupon, of course, we periodically fall victims to sheer power.

In phrases which almost suggest *1984*, he described the possible outcome of increased State power in an industrial age:

> The accumulation of beings, the mounds of men in the yards and factories cannot be left for all eternity in their need and thirst for riches; a planned and controlled degree of poverty, with promotion and uniforms, starting and ending daily to the roll of drums, that is what ought to come logically.

It is possible also to quarry out of Burckhardt's works a philosophy of history and a philosophy of life that are consoling in our present discontents, for when he was not directly communicating his ideas about history or culture, he was preaching a doctrine of individual self-sufficiency and urging his pupils to believe that serenity in disaster could be found through knowledge.

THERE are thus two distinguishable reasons for the current interest in Burckhardt. There are genuine grounds for the growth of his reputation, and also false or at least fortuitous ones. The sound and lasting reasons are less obvious and spectacular than the momentary and ephemeral ones. For Burckhardt's significance in the thought of our time arises much more from his teaching about the past than from his prophecies about the future.

The influence of his historical teaching, flowing out steadily as much through his disciples as through his books, has come gradually to colour all serious historical teaching. He has exerted a strong and continuous, if incalculable, influence in dethroning political history from its long eminence. He taught history as the history of culture, urged his pupils to approach the study of epochs or of nations through their art—painting, architecture, poetry—and to recognise that political developments were an integral part of the more interesting, more significant cultural development of peoples. After 1870 he felt his belief to be justified and strengthened; the fearful eruption of events in Europe seemed to him to "devaluate" the battles, treaties, and political incidents which made up the greater part of history as taught. These things were only important as indications of the state of the society which produced them.

For him history was a propaedeutic study—the essential preliminary to serious education. He developed the idea in a letter to Nietzsche: "My task has been to put people in possession of the scaffolding which is indispensable if their further studies of whatever kind are not to be aimless." This view of history as a scaffolding was, academically speaking, a more modest claim than that made by most of his contemporaries. Academic historians in the last half of the 19th century, whether they were concerned to elevate history as a science, or to stake out its claims as essentially philosophic, emphasised its importance in its own right rather than as a basis for other studies.

The first idea, the idea of history as the study of society as a whole, and not as a mere concatenation of political events, is now generally accepted in theory, if teaching practice still lags behind. The second idea, the idea of history as the scaffolding of all other knowledge, acts tacitly on most branches of contemporary thought. Historical thinking, that is the sense of present events as having been conditioned by

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the past and as belonging to a continuous sequence, is general to-day. It would be ridiculous to credit Burckhardt with having effected this change in the intellectual atmosphere. The development towards this kind of thinking had been going on for generations before his time; the idea of "progress," which he himself so much detested, was one of its first fruits. But he took full advantage of the existence of this mental habit and tried to substitute trained and perceptive historical thinking for its vague and uninformed application.

Here, in his services to history and through history to thought, lies the real significance of Burckhardt. But there is also the other Burckhardt, Burckhardt the prophet-philosopher. For his present *réclame* as a prophet he has only himself to blame. "I have always had a mania for prophesying," he admitted cheerfully to his friend Friedrich von Preen in 1870, and this was quite true. He had been at it ever since he was twenty and always in the gloomiest tone of voice. Thus he had written in 1844, to his great friend Gottfried Kinkel (a Liberal whose revolutionary activities in 1848 brought the friendship to an end)—

> The frightening accentuation of the rights of the individual consists in this: *cogito* (whether correctly or falsely doesn't matter) *ergo regno*. I still anticipate frightful crises, but mankind will survive them. . . .

In 1870 he was writing:

> The worst of all this is not the present war, but the era of wars upon which we have entered. . . .

More explicitly in 1882:

> It has long been clear to me that the world is moving towards the alternative between complete democracy and absolute, lawless despotism, and the latter would certainly not be run by the dynasties, who are too soft-hearted, but by supposedly republican Military Commands. Only people do not like to imagine a world whose rulers utterly ignore law, prosperity, enriching work, industry, credit, etc., and who rule with utter brutality. But those are the people into whose hands the world is being driven by the competition among all parties for the participation of the masses in any and every question. . . .

For part of the trouble he blamed the modern system of education, now extended free to all classes:

> Too many subjects taught, teachers obliged to have a superficial knowledge of too many subjects. . . . And naturally as a result: everyone dissatisfied with everything, and a scramble for higher positions which are of course very limited in number.

His prophecies were often searchingly accurate and sometimes remarkably true in detail, as when, in 1886, he foretold that the son of King Umberto would be the last King of Italy.

But he was not always so acute. He believed, under the impact of events in France in 1870, that class interests had now everywhere come to dominate national interests, a view which subsequent events have shown to be, if not wrong, at least several generations premature. In the eighties he declared that Paris could never again exercise any serious influence on European art, and that the German army was the greatest guarantee of peace in Europe.

His letters and his lectures also contain expressions of prejudice which stand out harshly against his general benevolence. His reasoned objections to projects of social reform—the introduction of a free health service, the abolition of capital punishment, the education of girls—can degenerate into the grumpy denunciations of a cross old conservative and his spiteful references to the Jews have a very ugly ring in modern ears. This particular prejudice did not arise from any racial theory; he revered the prophet Isaiah, for instance, as—after Homer—the greatest of poets. It arose rather from an unconscious resentment of their rising wealth and position. Since their emancipation they had become dominant in just those spheres—commerce and the professions—where for centuries Burckhardt's forebears and their like had been most powerful. His unreasonable indignation at the Jews for buying up works of art would probably, if he were alive to-day, be transferred with equal unreasonableness to the Americans; it is simply the jealousy felt by those who once had the money and the taste against those who now have the money and have naturally dedeveloped tastes to go with it. It need hardly be added that his abhorrence of violence, his utter unwillingness to allow that inhumanity could ever be justified on grounds of "historic necessity" made his prejudices entirely different in character from the vicious doctrines of 20th-century anti-Semitism.

For Burckhardt as for all of us, there were regions in which the brain worked with clarity and freedom, and regions which were clouded with inherited or ingrained prejudice. He had been born in 1819, the son of a Protestant pastor, himself a cadet of a great Basle patrician family. He grew up during the strong conservative reaction which followed the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, at a time when the city of Basle, governed by an oligarchy of ancient merchant families, was having domestic trouble which ended in the separation of the canton from the town, a development bitterly resented by the

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governing families of the city.

The young Burckhardt thus drank in the beliefs, traditions, and prejudices of a small and highly conservative society. But this society had developed a high civilisation because Basle stood at the cross-roads of Europe, the meeting-place through the centuries of Germanic and Latin culture. He grew up in a happy home, with respect for the intellect of the people who surrounded him and confidence in their moral judgments. He was not temperamentally a rebel, and when, full of the eagerness of youth, he went to study at Berlin and made friends with idealistic young liberals, he maintained, without forfeiting their friendships, his own strongly conservative views. Discussion with them, indeed, helped him to formulate his own ideas, and to recognise that the "freedom" he valued was not so much political freedom, as the freedom of the spirit.

His basic traditionalism was a great part of his strength as a scholar, and his attitude both to history and politics was directed by the clear ideas of right and wrong that he had learnt as a child. Where, in his thought, the Basle patrician is controlled by the thinking historian, his wisdom and foresight are remarkable, but when the Basle patrician takes charge the sage sometimes dwindles into an angry and obstinate old professor.

But Burckhardt always had enough humour and humility to mock at his own failings. He was partly making game of himself when he talked of his "mania for prophesying" and he knew very well, as he grew older, that he was becoming an indefatigable *laudator temporis acti* with no use at all for the modern world. And he had humanity enough to perceive with gratitude that the rising generation, whether or not it listened to his warnings, would know how to acclimatise itself—though he could not imagine how—to the changing world. "How very different from us the coming generation will be," he wrote in 1870. "It may well be that to the young we shall appear very much as the French *émigrés*, intent on a life of pleasure, appeared to those to whom they fled. . . ." It is a remarkably acute psychological comparison, and one that not many older people would have the courage to make. Whether or not the younger generation after 1870 felt this way about their elders, his phrase hits off very exactly how the generation that grew up after the First World War felt about their elders, whose laments for the legendary days before 1914 sounded to our ears at once melancholy and frivolous.

His ingrained prejudices apart, Burckhardt knew himself well, and it is only fair to him to respect what he said about himself. He steadfastly contended that he was not a philosopher; still more vehemently did he repudiate any belief in a philosophy of history or any desire to find one. As a young man he had reacted strongly against the influence of Hegel and had come under no influence, at Berlin or in his formative years, to give him any faith in the use of history as a basis for philosophy. "To me history is poetry on the grandest scale," he wrote when he was twenty-four,

> I do not regard it romantically . . . but as a wonderful process of chrysalis-like transformations, of ever new disclosures and revelations of the spirit; history is to me sheer poetry that can be mastered through contemplation. You philosophers go further, your system penetrates into the depths of the secrets of the world, and to you history is a source of knowledge because you see, or think you see, the *primum agens*, where I can see only mystery and poetry.

In his maturity he dismissed the philosophy of history in much harsher terms: it was, he said, a centaur, a contradiction in terms, "for history co-ordinates and hence is unphilosophical, while philosophy subordinates, and hence is unhistorical."

THE key to Burckhardt's view of history was not philosophy, but contemplation. The German word which he so often used is *Anschauung*, which stands mid-way between intuition and contemplation and is hard to translate exactly. As a student he spoke of his *"enorme Durst nach Anschauung,"* and this was not an enormous thirst for a philosophy of life, but an enormous thirst for the capacity to contemplate, to accept, and to understand life in all its fullness. He did not want to systematise his knowledge so as to prove a philosophical theory; instead he believed, not without reason, that to systematise knowledge was always to reduce or deform it. The theme of comprehensive acceptance runs through all his letters, books, and lectures. It is perhaps best summed up in a saying recorded by his disciple, friend, and eventual successor, Wölfflin: that the important thing was not "to know as much as possible but to love as much as possible. . . ."

This desire to feel love towards the creations and achievements of man was closely linked with his deep sensibility towards beauty, perhaps in a lesser degree with his feeling for words and poetry. He had wanted to be a poet and he continued for many years to write respectable and well-wrought verse which he occasionally published anonymously. But he was too good a judge of his own work to overestimate it and he abandoned all serious ambition

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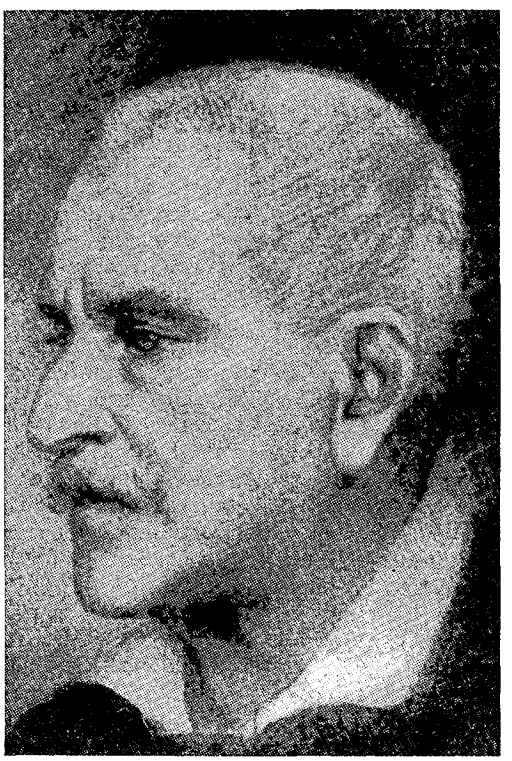
for his poetry when he moved over to history in his twenties. He has left, in a letter to a friend written when he was twenty-one, a vivid impression of this change of mind, during its actual process.

> My poetry . . . is in great danger of being sent packing now that I have found the height of poetry in history itself. There was a time when I looked upon the play of fantasy as the highest requirement of poetry; but since I must esteem the development of spiritual states, or quite simply, inner states as such, higher still, I now find my satisfaction in history itself, which exhibits this development in two distinct phases, running parallel, crossing and intermingling, and indeed identical: I refer to the development of the whole; add to that the brilliant outward events of history —the gorgeous motley dress of the world's progress, and I find myself back at the old, and much misunderstood saying that God is the supreme poet.



It is the utterance of a young man, grasping rather wildly at ideas through a fog of language, but it is interesting to see him, so very early in his studies, already making out his way towards the path that he was to follow—the interaction of the individual and the whole, of the outer and inner manifestation of man's spirit. Later on he was to talk less about the poetry of history, but the importance of beauty and love he always insisted on. Thus a few years later he advised a young man who was wallowing in adolescent cynicism that he should always, in studying the world, look for harmony and grandeur not for corruption and decay; no one, he added warningly, can be interesting who is not capable of love.

In an early poem he had described himself as *"ein Geist der nach der Schönheit pilgert,"* and this pilgrimage towards beauty continued unabated all his life. As a young man he wrote several poems about cathedrals and once even, in a fit of extravagant romanticism, serenaded the cathedral at Cologne. Architecture, of all the arts, moved and excited him most, and of architecture, in later life, the Baroque more than the Gothic. He acquired early and kept to the end of his days the capacity to drink beauty in great draughts, with both eyes and mind. But for him beauty was intimately associated with morality; the good and the beautiful were but two sides of the same idea. When he found the high-priests of the beautiful failing in their moral judgments he could be fierce in condemnation. All the waters of the Adriatic, he wrote, would not cleanse Titian of the shame of having associated with Aretino.

He made periodical visits to Italy or to the great museums of Europe and came home refreshed, full of vivid memories, sometimes assisted by the incisive little pen-and-ink sketches that he made, but later on by a great collection of photographs. Piling up a treasure of beauty through recollection, and piling up a treasure of wisdom through reading and contemplation during the short span of this earthly life: the theme recurs in his letters from youth to age. "I have seen the Raphael *stanze* again," he wrote from Rome in 1883, "and can now die in peace." When travelling at last became too strenuous for him, he spent happy evenings over his portfolios of pictures, and though he distrusted the possible effect of photography on painting he got so much pleasure out of this particular modern invention that he desisted from complaining.

Heinrich Wölfflin, who often spent an evening looking over photographs with him in his old age, has recorded the lyrical and loving terms which he would rather oddly apply to architectural features—calling a staircase *"liebevoll,"* or speaking of the *"Wonne"* of a colonnade. This curiously personal, almost sensual, love of beauty was with him in some sort a substitute for personal relations. His letters indicate that he had deliberately held his passions in check and directed the emotional, as well as the intellectual, forces of his nature towards things rather than persons.

The group of friends among whom he had

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moved as a young man was broken up by the Revolution of 1848, and from that time forward he carefully avoided relationships which put any strain on his emotions. When Nietzsche joined the staff of the University of Basle, it looked for a moment as though a real friendship might develop. Burckhardt went so far as to join with Nietzsche in his whim of pouring a libation to the gods out of his sitting-room window. But the momentary relaxation was not repeated. While Nietzsche longed for a mutual unbosoming of souls, Burckhardt politely but firmly kept the friendship at a lower temperature. He admired the younger man's knowledge and originality, but found himself in disagreement with many of his ideas, and his letters to him become studies in the art of polite disagreement. He could not, with his natural conservatism and gentleness, agree at all with Nietzsche's approval of the social outlaw and adulation of the super-man. In studying the Renaissance Burckhardt had seen enough of supermen. Remarkable, even fascinating, they might be, but in no way admirable. Nietzsche was bitterly disappointed, and in that winter of 1888–89 at Turin when he knew himself at last to be the all-creating, all-suffering God, he appealed to Burckhardt—"our great, our greatest teacher"—for his opinion on the world he had created. His last letter to Burckhardt, with its agonised opening sentence, is well known. "Dear Professor, I would in the end much rather be Professor in Basle than God. . . ."

IN SPITE of this withdrawal from human relationships, Burckhardt's attitude to history was essentially affirmative. He urged his pupils towards open-minded acceptance, sympathetic observation, love of knowledge and of beauty. If it were not for this affirmative character of his teaching, his solitary pilgrimage in search of beauty might be called escapism, since he left it so clearly on record that he had little or no hope for the future of Western civilisation. He described himself as a cheerful pessimist, and for one who looked upon the future in such dark colours he was indeed remarkably cheerful in his private life. He had taught himself to be content with little, with a couple of shabby rooms, with the piano that he played to himself in the evening, his glass of Veltlin wine, his cat Miggi, his cheap and frugal jaunts abroad. The picture can be made to look like that of a harmless egoist anxious to enjoy his own small corner of life and careless of the doom hanging over mankind.

In fact his way of life was consistent, purposeful, and in intention public-spirited. He believed that the only hope for the individual in the society of his day was in cultivating self-sufficiency and an outlook which would give him serenity in a collapsing world. He was convinced that the preservation of what was best in any culture depended in the end on the survival of traditions and ideas through the minds of such individuals during times of disaster. One of his heroes was Saint Severinus, another was Pope Gregory the Great—both men of great spiritual strength who kept alive nobler conceptions of civilisation during a period of total political collapse. But he had doubts about applying the principle of withdrawal to himself, for he was always pleased to find practical confirmation of his views or examples that he could cite in self-defence. Thus he spoke of the poet Eduard Mörike whose work he greatly admired as "one of the most comforting phenomena of the age; one sees how a nature born for beauty can unfold happily, magnificently even, in the most constrained surroundings. . . ." He was even more delighted when he acquired the complete works of Grillparzer, because the plenitude and variety of the books written by "this fugitive from the world" seemed to prove beyond doubt "how useful and fruitful a secluded life such as his can be for posterity."

This idea of the cultivation of inner freedom and serenity of spirit, a freedom to be acquired through knowledge, was particularly in evidence in his teaching during times of stress. The war of 1870 inspired him to the powerful lecture on *"Fortune and Misfortune in History,"* which, reconstituted from his notes, forms the last chapter of the *Reflections on History*. It is probably his most explicit and fully elaborated statement, not on "the philosophy of history" but on his idea of the continuity of the human spirit, and it contains passages of what is in fact moral rather than historical teaching. He would not have claimed so much for it himself; but he did claim that he was offering to the younger generation "consolation" against the hard times to come.

> The continuity of intellectual tradition . . . is a prime concern of man's earthly life, and a metaphysical proof of the significance of its duration, for whether a spiritual continuity existed without our knowledge, in an organ unknown to us, we cannot tell . . . hence we most urgently desire that the awareness of that continuity should remain living in our minds. . . .
>
> Imperceptibly we have passed from the question of good and evil fortune to that of the survival of the human spirit, which in the end presents itself to us as the life of *one* human being. That life, as it becomes self-conscious in and through history, cannot fail in time so to fascinate the gaze of the thinking man, and the study of it so to engage his power, that the ideas of fortune and misfortune inevitably fade. "Ripe-

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ness is all." Instead of happiness the able mind will take knowledge as its goal. . . .

Owing to the marvellous continuity of the human spirit, he concludes, something new must and will arise from the ruins of the old: for those who can bring themselves to look upon these things with equanimity:

> It would be a wonderful spectacle . . . to follow with knowledge the spirit of man as it builds its new house. . . . Any man with an inkling of what that meant would forget fortune and misfortune, and would spend his life in the quest of that wisdom.

There are, especially in this famous lecture on *"Fortune and Misfortune in History,"* echoes of the influence of Schopenhauer in whose opinions Burckhardt found so much that was sympathetic that he commonly spoke of him to his like-minded friends as "our philosopher." But to emphasise these elements is to make too much of Burckhardt's philosophy, the element in which he knew himself to be weakest. He is at his best in this lecture not when he is elevating the pursuit of historical knowledge as a bulwark against despair, but where he is revealing to his students the limitations of which they must beware. For our opinions on history are commonly formed with an immense egoism, and we "consider such past forces and individuals praiseworthy on whose work our present existence and relative welfare are based . . . just as if the world and its history had existed merely for our sakes."

This false approach to history had in Burckhardt's opinion been chiefly responsible for the spread of the erroneous idea of "progress," and it had been assisted by the insistence on chronological order which insensibly underlined the idea that the main purpose of the past was to lead up to the present. Thus his faith in the continuity of the human spirit, his interest in culture rather than in politics, and his conservative aversion from the idea of progress all combined to inspire his particular method of historical study, that of "taking transverse sections of history in as many directions as possible," and of looking at the past for itself alone, with no thought of what linked it to the present.

Yet both in his lectures and in his books he warned his students, with a humility rare among historians, of the errors and limitations they were to expect in his own work. In the opening paragraph of *The Civilisation of the Renaissance* he writes:

> To each eye the outlines of a given civilisation present a different picture and . . . the same studies which have served for this work might easily in other hands not only receive a wholly different treatment and application, but lead also to essentially different conclusions.

At the outset of his lectures on Greek Civilisation he uttered the same warning, and he reiterated it throughout the lectures which make up the *Reflections on History*. At every point in recorded history, the human element introduces error and doubt. Perhaps as a natural corollary to this distrust of human judgments, Burckhardt constantly urged his pupils to study art

A Note on English Translations

Not all of Burckhardt's works have been translated into English. His CIVILISATION OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY *is of course readily available in the Phaidon Edition. The two volumes which contain his lecture notes* WELTGESCHICHTLICHE BETRACHTUNGEN *and* HISTORISCHE FRAGMENTE *have both been translated, the first under the title* REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY *(Allen & Unwin, 1943) and the second as* JUDGMENTS ON HISTORY AND HISTORIANS *(Allen & Unwin, 1959). A translation of his* CONSTANTINE *was re-issued by Routledge in 1949. There is a small but discriminating selection from his voluminous correspondence available in a good translation by Alexander Dru (Routledge, 1955).* THE CICERONE *was of course several times issued in English as a useful guide-book to Italy in the later 19th and earlier 20th century, and can still be found in most good libraries.*

Burckhardt wrote in a persuasive and highly personal style which, in the original, has grace, vigour, and clarity. Unhappily the peculiar genius of the German language for involution has always made it difficult to translate gracefully into English. Even Middlemore's efficient version of the CIVILISATION OF THE RENAISSANCE, *though it reads quite smoothly, gives little impression of the charm and character of the original. Translators of the lecture notes have had an even harder task, as the notes themselves are sometimes in an unfinished or at least unpolished state. All the same, it is unfortunate that the translators of the* BETRACHTUNGEN *and the* FRAGMENTE *in their efforts (which are not invariably successful) to keep as close as possible to the original have produced awkward and graceless versions which necessarily convey a false impression of Burckhardt's mind. It is hard to recognise the voice of the poet-historian rendered into such jaw-breaking German-English.*

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and literature which, as historical sources, are relatively free of the deliberate intention to mislead. In studying sources he looked always for the kind of evidence that was solid, factual, and immediate, and disliked what he called "the thick-set hedge of opinions which seek to pass themselves off as records." This attitude to evidence arose from his natural love for "the concrete, for visible nature," and also from his experience in studying architecture. "You would not believe," he wrote at the age of twenty-four, "how little by little the *facta* of history, works of art, the monuments of all ages gradually acquire significance as witnesses to a past stage in the development of the spirit." But this apparently practical attitude to evidence was more closely linked to æsthetic appreciation than Burckhardt was himself aware. He had, for instance, very little use for the highly concrete, but not beautiful, evidence of inscriptions, and would not pay proper attention to the way in which their study was illuminating classical history. As a result, his posthumous *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, although abounding in profound and illuminating ideas, was out of date as a work of scholarship even while he was working on it.

His æsthetic approach was his greatest strength and his greatest weakness, at once his most original contribution to history and his blind spot. For in the end, in spite of his wide and detailed learning, his feeling for history was that of the artist rather than the scholar. We find him, in lectures and in letters, reiterating his belief in the inherent beauty of history. He had told Nietzsche that he wanted his pupils to acquire "personal possession of the past," to find out each for himself what he loved best, and to find happiness in so doing. This sounds more like a way of teaching æsthetic appreciation, of leading students to get the highest pleasure out of great poetry, or music, or painting. But then the pleasure that Burckhardt got out of history was pleasure of this kind, a pure and *personal* pleasure of delight in contemplation.

Was this then his real objection to systematising knowledge of the past, to establishing "historical principles" or working out a philosophy of history? Did so analytical an attitude seem to him a violation, or at least a noisy and tiresome interruption, of his purely æsthetic enjoyment? Every epoch, he would tell his students, exists for itself alone: it is neither necessary nor wise to look for what connects it with the present; simply to contemplate it is enough.

It was this kind of statement that made Benedetto Croce, in a singularly harsh analysis of Burckhardt, dismiss him as having failed altogether to face the real problems of historical interpretation; a self-indulgent pessimist who ran away from the world. The attack is not unjustified, but it is fundamentally unfair—for no one should judge Burckhardt without bearing in mind his own warnings about himself. He was not a philosopher, and did not seek to be. He was a man of a most penetrating if intermittent vision, an artist. He had from time to time a magical touch, a profound and illuminating insight; at other times, when this failed, he had moments of partial or complete darkness. But by directing his intense feeling for the visual arts in the region of history he illuminated parts of the subject with extraordinary originality and, by his influence, broadened and enriched the historical vision of later generations.

Whether the moral justification which he worked out for his own self-withdrawal is convincing, or whether the faith in the human spirit which he tried to instil through history seems justified—these are things which will be judged differently by readers of different temperaments. The play of Burckhardt's mind over the facts of history may be sometimes erratic and sometimes misdirected. (There is no historian of whom this could not be said.) But at its strongest and best, the light he throws on man and his history is penetrating and true. Like all great artists he sometimes achieved more than he knew. Certainly he left in his writings material for the formulation of a sustaining philosophy in time of crisis. His works became, in Germany under the Nazis, a source of intellectual strength and a dynamic force among the opponents of the régime. His emphasis on the necessity for love, his reprobation of violence, above all his faith in the individual and cultivation of the freedom of the spirit, made him, and will continue to make him, a guardian of cultural and spiritual values in a time of darkness. He could have wished for no more.

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Three Poems by Harry Fainlight

July 1959

A warm evening; from windows open
On air-shafts and streets, television screens
Flicker like faint summer sheet lightning.

A breeze, as sluggishly as from a tunnel rumbling
With the approaching of a distant train,
Blows from the hole left by the sunset.

Across the bomb-sites' plains the News of the World
Rolls over and over like a burning man
Trying to beat out his flames.

Early Thaw

That February afternoon's exhuming mildness; lazily thawing clouds yawning azure and soil stretching itself with snails and jewels; the sodden folios of old gardens and of tramps' clothes breathing précis.

Hour at which, from the end of the garden by the gap in the fence, from that patch of desiccated weed stalks growing out of old newspapers or unmelted snow, a ghost of soot and urine rises; rises and walks the paths of ashes strangely left behind from the ice.

Past gone to seed cabbages grown tall as sunflowers—requiems of odour rising from the slaughtered grasses—and the bare orchard standing amidst its fallen and rotted walls. Finally to where, above a rubbish-heap Christmas tree weeping tinsel, hangs the gallows of a broken swing.

Each spring to this, each February thaw; feeling already within him the pain of the first ingrowings;—cuticles of shoots and whistles piercing a heart already shot with birdsong.

For somewhere a child walks on the newly risen grass and the dead heart turns in its grave, groans and knows this bitter thawing; the old wound opened again each freshly whetted spring, stanchlessly to bleed out into autumn.

And to forget?

Old houses are demolished and yet the habitual ghosts still climb the stairways; wind up from the broken tiles as from a pile of old chipped gramophone records. . . .

Until the suburban breeze salvages some rusty cockcrow, changing shifts.

Clair de Suburbia

Earth sleeps; its dental plate
Taken out. O half-moon.

These whited sepulchres. . . .
On doorsteps bottles full of empty milk,

In rooms hallucinatory dust-sheets,
A blind man's walking-stick in every hall.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Plague Spot

He had no future. He disdained it. . . . His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and destruction. He walked frail, insignificant, shabby, miserable—and terrible in the simplicity of his idea calling madness and despair to the regeneration of the world. Nobody looked at him. He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men.

JOSEPH CONRAD, "THE SECRET AGENT."

ONE must keep it in proportion: it was a miserable, back-street affair, involving at most a couple of hundred people. And as for the violence of it—after all, I stood, a Jew, among a crowd who were yelling "F——ing Jews!" almost as often as they yelled anything else, and I felt no personal fear at all, as I would certainly have done among a native crowd uttering similar sentiments in my own South Africa. And when people began rocking a car and beating on it with their fists, and when some of them were arrested, there was a great deal of shouting, fist-waving, spitting, but no truncheons were drawn, no blood was spilt, and traffic passed without hindrance just at the end of the block, barely thirty yards away.

"They have tried to make Notting Hill a dirty word," Mosley cried at one point: looking at the man it was impossible to forget that the life work of his friends and exemplars had been to make of Europe a dirty word—to make of it a stinking pit, an abattoir. And now he stood there, still alive, speaking through a loudspeaker, a Parliamentary candidate for the constituency of North Kensington.* He had passed close by me, on his way to the van which he mounted, to make his speech; almost the first thing I had seen of him was the gum above his upper teeth, a livid, near-orange colour, as he lifted his lip in a smile. Then he was up above, one hand lifted to acknowledge the cheers (and the few boos) with which he was greeted. He was, at first, pitiful, with his freckled forehead and his bad teeth, and his portly aristocratic air of the man of affairs, which merely drew one's attention to the miserable failure which his life has been: he was much too old still to be climbing on to the backs of open trucks in sordid streets to make his speeches. And when he opened his speech by telling the crowd that the television cameras of the Columbia Broadcasting System were present, he spoke as if he mentioned this only to flatter his audience, to help build up its own estimation of itself. Yet, unmistakably, at the end of his public life, it was his own estimation of himself that was being built up by the presence of the cameras of what he proudly announced to be "the second-largest radio and television network in the world."

I HAD BEEN WAITING for some time for Mosley to come—he was very late—and after listening to him for about ten minutes, I left to find a place where I could have a cup of tea; I knew he would still be there when I returned. Previously I had been listening to one of Mosley's lieutenants, a bent-nosed, youngish man in a baggy sports jacket, who had seemed to hang loosely behind his own magnified voice. Nothing that Mosley said in the first ten minutes of his speech I had not already heard from the young man. There was one issue, and one issue only, on which Mosley was fighting the election: the Negroes. "Get them off our backs!" the young man cried. "Deport them!—in a humane, British way," Mosley said more urbanely, but the crowd wasn't fooled for a moment by his urbanity, or by his humanity. "Dirty niggers! F——ing Spades! Baboons, baboons, baboons!" they cried in support, and Mosley lifted his hand to acknowledge their fervour. There were no West Indians in the crowd, or if there were, they were at its very outskirts; previously, several had passed through the crowd without any of them being molested in any way. Interrupters were, however, very promptly silenced by the volume of noise produced by Mosley's supporters who cried at them, among other things: "Jew-boy! Israel! F——ing Jews!" In point of fact, I would say that none of the few hecklers were actually Jewish (the meeting happened to be taking place on the Jewish New Year's Day); but the crowd wasn't capable of making discriminations among those it considered to be its enemies.

Of some of Mosley's supporters, one can say that they wore their hatreds, their sicknesses, like badges on their flesh; I recall one creature who could not keep his head still for a moment, nor any feature on it, so that while his head nodded and trembled, his eyes blinked, his lips twitched, even his nose moved. And there was a woman

* The results of the elections on October 8th: Mr. G. H. R. Rogers (Labour), 14,925; Mr. R. W. Bulbrook (Conservative), 14,048; Mr. M. Hydleman (Liberal), 3,118; Sir Oswald Mosley (Union Movement), 2,821 (less than one-eighth of the total votes polled, thereby losing his deposit of £150).

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with a square body in a red flowered dress: her upper lip, painted to match her dress, was extraordinarily long and came to a point in the middle, like a beak, while above, grotesquely, were stretched a pair of wide gaping nostrils. And both the twitcher and that woman, so ugly one looked at them and looked away, were obviously receiving solace from the knowledge that there was a man in the world who spoke directly to the horror their lives were, and would make that same horror of the whole world, if he could. Yet there were also ordinary-looking working-class youths in Italianate clothes and elaborate hair-styles; a smartly-dressed woman in navy blue with high colour in her cheeks; an elderly gentleman with a brimless, sports-car cap, a military moustache, and a trim regimental or club blazer, who could have been anybody's neighbour in any middle-class area. And they all cheered, listened, they all hated alike.

I LEFT THEM, as I have said, and returned about thirty minutes later, just in time for Mosley's peroration. Now he was no longer pitiful, not because his audience had grown; not because he seemed any more of a threat than he had been before; but because it is impossible to pity a man who is where he most wants to be. And Mosley was there: in the blank, glazed world of the demagogue, where all distinction between himself and the world-not-himself was lost. When he prophesied victory he was speaking the truth; for he had already conquered. In that narrow street, black and yellow with filth and sunlight, he heard only his own voice, magnified and trapped between the walls: he *was* his voice, and his voice filled all the space he was conscious of. He came to his climax, he ceased, and the cheers (and the booing from a section of the crowd near the back) broke out afresh.

The questions that followed seemed to have been planted. Would Mosley clear up the black brothels? Yes, he would clear up the black brothels. Would Mosley protect the rights of all white tenants? Yes, he would protect the rights of all white tenants. Would Mosley investigate why the police were protecting the black "vice-kings"? Mosley replied that the police were a fine body of men, "as British as we are," and it was the corrupt politicians who gave them their orders who had to be cleared out of office. The police listened stolidly, expressionlessly: there were a great number of them scattered about, including two senior officers, and throughout the meeting they had been moving about the crowd, coming between hecklers and Mosley's supporters, standing with folded arms behind those who screamed most loudly, consulting together and moving off again in pairs. Mosley was anxious not to offend them; but the crowd cared less, as one soon saw when the trouble began.

The "trouble" came in the form of a Labour Party loudspeaker-car, which began to make its way through the crowd—an act which I have no doubt at all was intended to be provocative, and which succeeded in being so. Mosley had come to his climax, in his speech; but what of his supporters, who had been screaming their violence and imprecations into the air, and were now suddenly to be abandoned, each one of them alone again in a world that was as huge and multifarious and indifferent to them as it had ever been? No wonder they dreaded their awakening; no wonder they rushed at the Labour Party car and began rocking it and beating at it with their fists, cursing, raving, saved for the moment. And no wonder that the police, after their afternoon of boredom and tension, suddenly unleashed their own violence. With faces as pale and eyes as dark as those of the mob, they lunged, they grabbed, they had one youth, and a second, and were dragging them off to the Black Maria parked down the block; they grabbed a third, older man, and he too was being carried in a bunch of policemen and others down the street. By that time the Labour Party car was through, though someone seemed to have slashed at it as it went past, for at the end of the block it halted, one tyre collapsed around the wheel-hub. In tears, the wife and the three little daughters of the last man to be arrested were trying to get into the Black Maria, but they were held back; when the van drove away, leaving them in the street, one of the little girls screamed, "Isn't Daddy coming back?"

A FEW POLICEMEN stood guard over the Labour Party car, but by this time most of the mob seemed to have forgotten all about it: their hatred was turned altogether against the police. "F——ing rozzers! They nick our boys and let the Spades go! The Spades pay them for the job! Nigger-lovers! Let the boys go! Let the boys go!" They shouted and waved their fists; but they kept their distance. The mother and three little girls were put into a car and driven away; when I turned I saw that Mosley had gone. The meeting, the incident, such as it was, was over; though a smaller crowd was gathering hostilely now around a Liberal Party car which had just arrived on the scene. "Jew-boy!" they cried. "Jew-boy!" The twitching man scurried past me; "Baboons!" he was saying to himself. Still the crowd milled in the street, but soon each member of it would have to go, on his own, down other streets.

Dan Jacobson

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Nora Wydenbruck

"MY TWO WORLDS" was the title of Nora Wydenbruck's autobiography; but like nearly all those who have known more than one way of life, more than one world, she knew considerably more than two. To move from one world into another is to experience the seemingly endless multiplicity of worlds, their affinities, differences, and intersections. Where no certainty remains, this experience may induce a chronic giddiness, that sense of the absurd familiar from a whole literature of exile and estrangement. It may also lead to a rare mellowness, tolerance, and understanding. Nora Wydenbruck resisted the giddiness by doing her best to reduce her worlds to two; but, since she possessed those other qualities, neither her social nor her artistic world was narrowly exclusive.

To say that her first world was Austrian is a simplification; not only because she was born in England, or because on her mother's side she was descended from the Fuggers of Augsburg, but because her early life was divided between the cosmopolitan world of Courts and capitals and the very different one of Carinthia. And it is to Carinthia—until very recently the least industrialised and the least fashionable of the Austrian alpine provinces—that she felt most closely bound. There she married the painter Alfons Purtscher, and there she chose to be buried. Even in her last years she maintained this tie by her devotion to the Carinthian peasant poet, Christine Lavant, whose work she translated and adapted. As a painter, too, Nora Wydenbruck belonged to Carinthia rather than to the capitals in which her work was exhibited.

The world of Carinthia—where I happen to be writing this—is incomparably more remote from London than that of Vienna, even the Imperial Vienna of Nora Wydenbruck's youth. Her Viennese and London worlds, the aristocratic and the artistic, mingled visibly in the peculiar aura of her London home, a modest terrace house which had been strangely transformed and magnified by her husband's skill as a painter, decorator, and gardener. To the peasant world of Carinthia she owed her earthiness and her bluntness—which could seem formidable until one discovered how vulnerable she was, how sensitive and how brave; to London, Vienna, Italy, and France, she owed her wit and her poise. But courage, I think, was her outstanding virtue.

Though I first met her more than ten years ago, it was in the last half year of her life, the time of her illness, that I saw most of her, and had most reason to admire her courage. To the very end, and I saw her last only a few hours before she died, she preserved her humour, her sympathy, and her zest; and she continued to work at a new version of her autobiography, intended for German readers, and translations of German poetry till she was too weak to hold a pencil.*

Since she knew extreme hardship and the multiplicity of worlds, and was as earthy as she was religious, Nora Wydenbruck was never a mere survivor of the old order; but she would not give in, and used the old order as a source of strength to resist the new giddiness. During one of my last visits she talked excitedly about a new novel she had read for a publisher, describing it as "an odious masterpiece"; her report was favourable. At the same time she remained faithful to Rilke, with whom she will always be associated as a biographer and translator; and Rilke, too, was a poet of exile and estrangement, a poet of many worlds.

Michael Hamburger

* In an obituary paragraph in *The Times* (2 September), T. S. Eliot wrote: "(She) was a gifted writer: but very exceptionally gifted as a translator from English into German and from German into English .... For the same translator to render successfully Rilke's *Duineser* Elegies into English and my *Four Quartets* into German is a feat of translation for which I know no parallel ...."

Don on Rostow

THE ECONOMIST (15th and 22nd August) published a long, two-part 16-page summary of Professor W. W. Rostow's "Non-Communist Manifesto," hailing it as "one of the most stimulating contributions made to economic and political thought since the war." According to its own admirable summary, Rostow distinguishes

> five stages of growth. First, there are the traditional societies, in which the inaccessibility of modern science puts a ceiling on productivity; one need not waste much time talking about these because in the modern world there will very soon be no entirely traditional societies left. Secondly, there are the transitional societies, which are created once a country is rich enough to devote more than about five or ten per cent of its national income to investment and once a new leading élite has emerged which has the urge and scope to begin building a modern industrial society. The interesting feature of Professor Rostow's analysis here is how often, all through history, in Europe as well as in Africa and Asia, xenophobic nationalism rather than the pure profit motive has created that urge and that élite. Thirdly, there is the stage of the "take-off," a brief period concentrated usually within a few decades, when the economy and the society start

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> to transform themselves so that economic growth becomes more or less automatic. . . . Countries like Argentina, Turkey, and—most important—India and China are in the stage of take-off now.
>
> It is the fourth stage which has hitherto proved most momentous for mankind. About sixty years after its take-off begins, a country has generally reached what Professor Rostow calls the dangerous stage of maturity. As each country comes up to it, as the imperatives of diffusing the new technology lose their obsessive control over men's minds, a three-way dilemma emerges in the maturing country's policy. Should it go straight on to the fifth stage of high mass-consumption? Should it take out some of the new benefits by developing a welfare state society and by working less hard? Or should it use its new resources to pursue external power and influence, if necessary by aggressive war?

The academic's instinctive reaction is to pick holes. It is a healthy reaction. Admittedly I am not one of those professional historians who denigrate any *empirical generalisation* about history as a *philosophy* of history; nor do I believe the falsehood that history is and must be simply particulars, or that scientific method is inapplicable to it; nor if Marx, Spengler, and Toynbee were wrong can we tell *a priori* that Rostow has failed where they once failed. But the temptation to falsify proposed generalisations must not be resisted. The descent into the particular is not simply low-brow or unimaginative; it is the first and most essential task, the definition even, of the critic. Otherwise how do we know whether what is said is true?

Now no one is going to deny that societies get richer, that technical progress is leading us almost inevitably to an Affluent Society. Nor are the stages marked off by Rostow in that development at all objectionable. But why should so much of human history be made to depend upon it? More precisely, the articles try to explain as much recent history as possible by (a) the existence of separate nations, and (b) the fact that they enter "take-off" at different dates—their subsequent progress takes (Rostow says) always the same time.

It may be unfair to the future book to criticise a summary which possibly misrepresents by brevity. But the whole historical section (apart from the recent purely economic history of which Rostow is a master) is very unsatisfactory. "Traditional" society is more or less assumed to be everywhere feudal, so that the centralised "hydraulic" civilisations, with which Karl Wittfogel has familiarised us, simply disappear. Moreover, such a typical generalisation as this one does not convince: when the initial "reactive nationalism" expels the foreign devils and starts industrialisation it often launches into foreign adventures—

> thus, the American attempt to steal Canada during the French wars; Bismarck's operations against Denmark, Austria, and France from 1864 to 1871; Japan's acquisition of primacy in Korea in 1895; and the Russian drive through Manchuria. In this perspective, the wars of the French Revolution become the greatest examples of regional aggression. Such adventures can help maintain national cohesion in a society where the task of modernisation raises difficult domestic issues. The gropings for a unifying national policy of, say, Nasser and Sukarno in the years 1955–59 are a version of an old problem and a familiar response; so are the battle cries centred on Kashmir, West Irian, and Israel, and the tendency of politicians in transitional societies to cling to the anti-colonial banner.

Now what can the French Revolution be doing in this (otherwise very appropriate) *galère*? Clearly it has to be thrust in here because as a major event in Rostow's period it has to go somewhere, and France was not then a "mature" society. However, any educated man can see that this is an entirely false account of the foreign relations of Robespierre and Napoleon. Why not just leave these two characters, and the France of their day, as something the thesis cannot explain? The attempt to capture them for Rostow is simply intellectual imperialism.

The same fault crops up in the next sentence.

> It is reassuring to note that these early adventures, associated with late preconditions or early take-off periods, have usually given way to absorption in the adventure of modernisation. Post-Civil War America, post-1873 Germany, post-1905 Japan, and post-1920 Russia were too absorbed at home to assert themselves dangerously on the world stage for several decades.

Was Japan "mature" in the 1930s when she attacked China? Or Russia in 1920 when she attacked Poland? Or France at Solferino? Rostow seems aware of this in his qualifying phrase on Germany:

> One must go back to a point already made: that in many countries a reactive ambitious nationalism lay initially at the root of modernisation. That is part of the answer to the question why Germany succumbed to the temptations of power in 1914.

So much, then, in his own words, for this, the most questionable of all his generalisations. There is, of course, nothing in the period of "primary accumulation" that prevents foreign aggression. If the U.S.A. was comparatively peaceful in this period it was because she had satisfied her territorial ambitions to southward fifty years before, and had scarcely anywhere to go—where she could go, however, she went

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(Cuba). If the U.S.S.R. was peaceful it was not the technical barrier of the oceans but the *force majeure* of Japan, French-supported Poland, and later Germany.

THE GENERALISATIONS, THEN, are not entirely correct, though there surely is here a genuine insight into the earliest period of swift growth: Britain, and to some extent U.S.A., were exceptional in that their growth was due to the profit-seeking of individuals. Other countries grew in a more organised way, and were motivated by "re-active nationalism." His stress on this is one of Rostow's major virtues.

But *who* is the bearer of this "re-active nationalism"? *Who* organises the economy? Here the "non-Communist Manifesto" is much inferior to the Communist. Rostow's growth just happens. The agent throughout is the nation-state, not further analysed. The economy grows because the nation-state so decides, and its growth has psychological and other effects on—the nation-state. It is the world-view of an imaginative and widely-read national-income statistician. Neither classes nor ideologies really bother him at all. There is no analysis of the exact *kind* of obstacle that traditional society opposes to growth, nor of the kind of person—so very various from case to case—who overcomes these obstacles. Nor do we learn how these various classes fare under further growth. True, they believe in ideologies. But these, too, are played down. Nazism makes a brief appearance as an exaggerated "re-active nationalism" (seventy years after the take-off!). Communism has to figure more, since the whole thesis is based on Soviet-American rivalry. But it too is consistently subordinated to Russian national interest, and appears as a mere blip on the inevitable curve of growth—the "consequences of building compound interest into societies' habits and institutions."

Compound interest is indeed the hero of this abstract plot, and this makes the story even more of a simplification than Marx's. For in Marx, too, economic growth figures, but so do social forces, and the whole theory of history is a history of their interaction, the "relations of production." Yet even Marx grossly over-simplified by not allowing ideas any weight, and in this Rostow, a much purer economist, of course follows him. It is obvious, as the examples of Napoleon and Hitler show, that ideas can cause wars and other major changes all by themselves, and the grave charge can be levied against this work that it tries to write history without ideas.

Moreover, the main relevant connection between ideology and economic growth is that Communist ideology favours growth. The take-off is earlier in a Communist country, since it follows immediately the seizure of power, whatever the present level of poverty, and maturity comes more rapidly. It is interesting to see how this inconvenient fact is made to disappear. The author can only have recourse to the Nutter-Clark argument, which is that U.S. growth, 1870–1955, is as great as Soviet growth, 1880–1955 (*American Economic Review*, May, 1957). The monstrous irrelevance of this fact is demonstrated by numerous critics in the very same issue of the *A.E.R.* (and by myself in this journal, October 1955). It should surely not be necessary to repeat that the present Soviet economic system began in 1928, not 1880; that thereafter Soviet growth was interrupted by one of the most destructive invasions in history, while the same war served but gently to stimulate the U.S. economy; and that in peace-time years since 1928 Soviet growth has exceeded American by an average of four per cent. It shakes confidence in much else to find this dead horse still being ridden.

It is hard to forgive so gross a lapse, and the concomitant failure to state that Eastern Europe is outstripping Western Europe, and China India. *If* growth were indeed the key to nearly all modern history then the superiority of Communist growth is the main fact in modern history. Now I myself no longer hold this view, since the recent years in South-East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa show a retreat from Communism; evidently these peoples, even those still under colonial rule or at subsistence level, are mature enough and idealistic enough to prefer freedom with slower growth. But Rostow says nothing about this, and his attitude is very different.

First the superiority of Communist growth is, as we have seen, not exactly denied but slurred over. Secondly, there is a whole series of doubtful propositions about "the Affluent Society." When the Soviet Union becomes affluent its rate of economic growth will fall to the American rate—why? After all, America has never grown as fast as U.S.S.R. at any stage. Again, the more affluent the U.S.S.R. is, the more resources it must allocate to mere capital replacement—not so, for the proportion of national income required to replace capital is not a function of the level reached but of the recent rate of growth.*

Above all, affluence or high mass-consumption *must* soften Communist fanaticism: the Soviet leaders face, says Rostow, the typical end-of-maturity choice between foreign aggression

* i.e., if one grew rapidly in the past the current national income is large compared with the older portion of the stock of capital; and this proposition is entirely independent of the absolute size of either magnitude.

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and domestic ease. In 1945 they chose the former. But further growth now makes domestic ease necessary if only as a means to full employment, and the H-bomb damps aggression. The extended passages on the H-bomb—which have little to do with the thesis—are excellent: I should be the last to deny that the H-bomb brings sobriety to one and all. But *why* should increased prosperity under Communism make Communism less dangerous? This very common assumption is nowhere really discussed by Rostow, who simply takes it over. Will it make the subjects of Communist governments less docile? Obviously not. Then will it soften the leaders in some way? As Max Beloff once put it: "Do you prefer a new refrigerator in your larder or a man converted to your views in Patagonia?" The answer is surely this: if you are a Soviet leader you've always wanted both, but now you've got the refrigerator.

Peter Wiles

On the American Left

Letter from New York — By Anatole Shub

"LOOK BACK IN APATHY" was the *Observer*'s headline on Kenneth Tynan's report of a Columbia University meeting held last spring to discuss "What Happened in the Thirties." It was, for many besides Mr. Tynan, a disappointing show; as he noted, the word "socialism" rarely (and the word "poverty" never) crossed the lips of the speakers (Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Lionel Trilling, Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, Norman Podhoretz).

Yet Mr. Tynan, seated in a front row, may have suffered from the theatre critic's habitual preoccupation with the action on stage. The genuine drama at Columbia that night was the audience. Some 1,500 persons, about a third of them students, paid to attend this inquiry into a decade synonymous with adventurous social engineering—a decade which various repentant chiliasts and Congressional committees had later made distinctly unfashionable. Not for some years has so sizeable a crowd assembled in New York for what might be considered a serious left-wing discussion.

Back in 1952, the American Committee for Cultural Freedom had attracted almost as many people to the Starlight Roof of the Waldorf Astoria for a symposium on McCarthyism; then, too, the audience supplied the fireworks. After the speakers had presented their theses, a pudgy, middle-aged radio actor named Philip Loeb rose to charge that "blacklisting" had deprived him of a livelihood, and what was the distinguished panel going to do about it. Somebody supplied what passed for a judicious answer, but Mr. Loeb some time afterward committed suicide. Such, in terms more stark than typical, was the sullen climate of what discreet sociologists now call "the difficult years"—a climate which made talk of leftish political experimentation unlikely, if not impossible.

Later, when the Eisenhower and post-Stalin administrations transformed what had seemed a pre-war period into what had all the earmarks of a post-war one, the general relief took the form of political escapism, with the Twenties the favoured period. Meetings on cold-war themes ("Is Co-existence Possible?") continued to be held, but now attracted only the addicts—the same 150–200 journalists and professors, most of them former Leninists of varying tenure and temper. As for Socialist meetings, if a few did take place during the first Eisenhower Administration, they were well concealed.

The brief recandescence of political interest which the Hungarian Revolution evoked was promptly extinguished at a Madison Square Garden mass meeting. In order to fill that spacious arena, the meeting's liberal sponsors had enlisted the co-operation of various Central European emigré associations and the local Roman Catholic Archdiocese. The result was that Miss Anna Kethly, only a few days gone from the side of Imre Nagy, was shouted down by fascists in the audience, while the address of Mr. Henry Luce was interrupted by a loud cry from the mezzanine: "Down with the Jew Karl Marx!" It was a sobering experience for liberals who had been preaching the "broad anti-Communist front."

The events of the last three years—Suez, Little Rock, the recession, etc.—have continued the process, bringing about a perceptible shift in the attitude of American intellectuals toward the Government and the business community. From

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the sweeping identifications ("our country and our culture") made in the forties and early fifties, a significant number of intellectuals seem to be reverting to the cool detachment that was traditional between 1865 and 1939. At the same time, the whole subject of Communism and anti-Communism, which since the late thirties had provided many with an emotional substitute for domestic criticism, now seems played out; New York no longer has any claim to special knowledge of Soviet phenomena (there are no "Malenkovites" here now, as there were Trotskyites twenty years ago), and the leftish intellectuals who used to claim such knowledge have now largely adopted an attitude of watchful waiting towards Khrushchev's Russia. Indeed, when Mr. Khrushchev himself visited us in September, almost his only hecklers (apart from emigrés) were the former associates of Senator McCarthy. That old "broad front" had narrowed considerably. The prime mover in arranging protest demonstrations and newspaper advertisements was L. Bent Bozell, co-author with his brother-in-law William P. Buckley Jr. of *McCarthy and His Enemies,* the authorised defence of the Wisconsin Senator. The emotional climax of the one poorly-attended anti-Khrushchev meeting was the sudden appearance from the wings of the widow McCarthy, followed by a "moment of silent prayer" for the memory of her late husband. One or two nominal liberals who had been persuaded to grace the dais squirmed visibly.

Most of the New York liberals, however, stayed at home—neither greeting nor "attacking" Mr. Khrushchev—and some of them, at least, were reading the quarterly *Dissent,* whose recent rise is itself a sign of the new mood. The magazine evoked little response when it was founded in 1954 by various defectors from the "Schachtmanite" wing of American Trotskyism.* A middle-aged cousin to the *Universities and Left Review*, *Dissent* still has only a few thousand readers, but in the last year or so it has acquired a decided *chic*. It now sports some highly respected academic bylines; gift subscriptions are being exchanged on Madison Avenue; and *Voices of Dissent,* a paperbacked anthology from its pages, is being hawked to suburban pharmacies by Barney Rosset of the Grove Press, who also discovered Beckett, Ionesco, Kerouac, and the unexpurgated *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Dissent's charm does not derive from its conception of socialism, which even its editors consider fuzzy (the magazine says less about the American economy in a year than one learns in a single day from the New York *Times*), but rather from a bumptious lack of style which is refreshing after the customary diet of pseudo-omniscient slicks and faded liberal weeklies. *Dissent*'s proletarian typography and unedited prose convey a rhetoric which suggests the gassy boyishness of the sectarian thirties without imposing any political view more *outré* than that of the Americans for Democratic Action. Its chief contribution thus far is the reiteration of such negative slogans as "the American Celebration" and "the Permanent War Economy."

Meanwhile, there have been faint stirrings among the remnants of American Socialism. Two years ago, the Socialist party long represented by Norman Thomas was rejoined, after a split that lasted two decades, by a majority of the Social Democratic Federation. Now the Independent Socialist League—the Trotskyite circle around Max Shachtman—has dissolved, and its hyperactive members have moved *en masse* into the reunited Socialist party and its Young People's Socialist League—which have seemed busier in the last year than in the previous six.

EARLY this summer the Socialists sponsored a forum on "Art and Commitment" which drew about 250 people, almost all under 35 years of age, to the street-floor auditorium of the venerable red-brick, six-storey building long known as the Rand School or People's House. This building, a half-block from Union Square, was the citadel of American Socialism under Debs and Hillquit; a young man named Alger Hiss studied in its classrooms thirty years ago. It is now owned by a local of the powerful International Association of Machinists (AFL-CIO), who have installed air-conditioning, fluorescent lighting, and the hideously cheerful colour schemes which are the pride of American industrial design. In the auditorium itself (in which only a few years ago Hamburg's visiting *Burgomeister* Max Brauer had delivered international socialism's eulogy for the departed Algernon Lee, last of the American Socialist saints), brisk, flat canary-yellow paint has replaced the old murals which had shown thin, pre-Raphaelite young ladies stretching their bloodless arms to a socialist heaven. Back of the rostrum, the Machinists have posted a large three-colour placard with the Orwellian legend: "Union Vigilance is the Price of Security."

Under this sign, then, were gathered three veterans of the Greenwich Village Left: the novelist Paul Goodman, an anarchist; the playwright Lionel Abel, an existentialist; and the art critic Harold Rosenberg, a Marxist. Rosenberg was the only panelist to wear a tie (paisley); none used the microphone, and all preferred to remain seated, rather than rise to

* See Daniel Bell, "Dissenting Opinion," ENCOUNTER, September.

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the lectern. Most of the ensuing dialogue was, likewise, quite private. Nearly an hour was consumed in arguing over why, at a caucus last winter, the three panelists could not agree on the wording of a joint Press release on the Pasternak case. They could now agree, however, that "progressive" writers had been simple-minded during the now un-Popular Front; that Pound, Céline, and other fascists were, nonetheless, able writers; and that the present climate was forbidding for both art and politics. Throughout, the speakers hovered on the brink of a jaded amusement with the hopeless foibles of American society and of their fellow-intellectuals.

The youthful audience, however, was deadly serious, and its expectant silence demanded a return to sobriety, an effort to progress beyond gags to *geist*. At last Goodman turned from an analysis of his own literary motives ("I write for my friends—Sophocles, Milton . . .") to the ugliness of most American towns, a theme on which he is both passionate and qualified (his brother Percival is a leading architect, with whom he has collaborated in a book, *Communitas*). The inner natures of the people, Goodman declared, are violated by the buildings among which they live. Not so, interjected Abel; they get what they want. "Oh, no," said Goodman, "I shall never accept this," and went on to say that artists must set themselves to changing it all. "How?" asked three voices from the front row. "Talk it up," was Goodman's answer, "tell your friends." Precisely how, asked a burly, blond young man, could æsthetic talk lead to the necessary political action? A good question, mused Rosenberg, in view of the well-known facts of who decides what is built and how. Goodman's reply—that if you expose ugliness, you shake Madison Avenue and thereby tumble the Eisenhower Administration—provided a cheerful, but quite evasive, note on which to end the meeting.

As at Columbia, the discussion had foundered at the sight of real problems. Indeed, the default of the Socialist speakers was more apparent, for the politics of urban real estate are precisely the sort which remain most susceptible to an old-fashioned radical power-analysis. According to a Pulitzer Prize reporter of the *Times*, the most influential men in city life to-day are the anonymous architectural experts of the major insurance companies, which now finance most large-scale urban construction. (It is they, for example, who have vetoed the building of any new theatres or hotels in New York since the Depression.) Herein lies a whole complex of scarcely-articulated political issues; yet neither the downtown nor the uptown panelists—nor, for that matter, any of the contributors to *Dissent*—have yet engaged a subject which literally surrounds them.

BLAME it on the threat of nuclear weapons, if you will; blame it on the speedy return of economic prosperity: the fact is that there is a real gap between the leftish sentiments now fashionable and the concrete social issues Americans face. The gap is most apparent in the somnolent record of the overwhelmingly Democratic Congress elected last fall, but it is primarily an intellectual gap. Somehow, in these last two decades of "bipartisanship" and "moderation," this society has failed to generate any significant body of critical thought or community of dissident intellectuals capable of offering not merely an alternative government (the change from Truman to Eisenhower) but an alternative *régime* (from Hoover to Roosevelt, or Churchill to Attlee). Those who think of American politics in terms of automatic cycles, from progressivism to business-as-usual and back to progress again every generation, overlook the fact that the *content* of progress under Roosevelt, Wilson, and even Lincoln had been prepared, beforehand, by "extremist" intellectuals outside the two-party system. Just as there could have been no Emancipation Proclamation without the prior efforts of the Abolitionists, so the New Freedom and the New Deal were largely made possible by the old Socialist party, which got a million votes for Debs in 1912 and 1920 and nearly as many for Thomas in 1932.

There is a tendency now to ignore the Socialists' achievement; at the Columbia meeting, perhaps for autobiographical reasons, Schlesinger discussed only the Democrats, Mailer the Communists, and Trilling and Miss McCarthy mainly the Trotskyites. Yet it was chiefly the Socialists who, through their campaigns, meetings, books, and periodicals, sustained from 1908 through 1933 a minority tradition which nourished, among others, such present-day American progressives as Senator Paul H. Douglas and Walter Reuther. The economists, political scientists, sociologists, labour organisers, publicists, and social workers reared in this tradition—and there were many, thanks to the massive pre-1914 German and Russian-Jewish immigrations—produced a corpus of ideas and techniques which were readily tapped by the later New Dealers, many of whom (like Rex Tugwell) had themselves been Socialists. It may be tiresome to hear Norman Thomas repeat, for the umpteenth time, that Franklin Roosevelt enacted the Socialist party platform of 1928; but the statement remains true.

Roosevelt's reforms are usually cited as the main reason that there is no political advance-

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guard to-day comparable to the Socialists of the twenties. Hitler, Stalin, and McCarthy are others. Hitler and Stalin, by posing a life-or-death choice of the "lesser evil," compelled many in America to affirm the leading values of a society they had previously been bent on changing. McCarthy's handiwork is manifest in the stigma which still attaches to such innocent political phrases as "a dues-paying member," "signed a petition," "joined a committee," etc.

Yet there are more intimate reasons, too, why to-day's inchoate discontents lack intellectual focus. Once again, the story begins with Roosevelt. Quite apart from his accustoming liberals to expect all leadership to come from the White House, F.D.R. guaranteed full employment—not just to workers, but, perhaps more important, to the intellectual class. In this, as in other things, his innovations were pursued by Truman, Eisenhower, and the more farsighted business leaders. From the WPA Writers Project through the OWI and Military Government down to Radio Free Europe and the Ford Foundation, American intellectuals have been taken care of, without regard to race, colour, or previous condition of surliness. This was not the case before 1933, which led bright young men then more easily to assume places in dissident movement. (Mr. Ed Sullivan, for example, who now runs television's most popular variety show, started his career as a sportswriter for the Socialist *Daily Call* in the 1920's.)

To-day, even those intellectuals who do not work directly for the Government are dependent, in some degree, on its favours—the universities on its grants-in-aid and assigned research projects, the publishing houses on its foreign-exchange machinery and orders for military and overseas libraries, and the periodicals on its tax policies. (Liberal magazines here are now customarily subsidised as "tax losses" by wealthy individuals or institutions.) No "anti" movement can hope to match the job opportunities offered intellectuals by the plethora of public, semi-public, and business-connected agencies. Among the panelists at the Socialist meeting, for example, Rosenberg works at the Advertising Council, Abel recently won a Guggenheim Fellowship, and Goodman has received several grants. Michael Harrington, the chairman of their meeting, receives no pay as leader of the Young People's Socialist League but earns his keep at the Fund for the Republic, an offshoot of the Ford Foundation.

And this, it should be noted, is the "left" wing of the intellectual camp, the literary-Bohemian wing which has remained fairly independent in its outlook. At the other extreme are the men who, as Philip Rieff once put it, moved in one generation from the New School to the RAND Corporation, from social science to "policy science"—concocting in the process such intellectual taffy as "people's capitalism" and "limited nuclear war."

YEARS ago, there was a civics textbook which tried to convey the complexity of modern life by asking the student to imagine the chaos that would result if every city-dweller simultaneously decided to wash his hands, or use the subway, or play his radio loud. Such calamities do not happen, the text explained, because the urban functions have been economically integrated on the basis of a careful calculation of statistical probabilities. The intellectual function, too, has now been efficiently integrated, and it is useless to speculate on the fireworks that might go off on "the day the grants run out." They will not run out, for they are a prudent investment in the safety of the whole enterprise. Whatever critique of American society is to be developed in future will have to be conceived largely by intellectuals who are themselves members of the Establishment. Perhaps, as the student attendance at the various left-wing discussions would suggest, this task will be assumed by the next (post-"beat") generation. Meanwhile, if the general disillusion with Eisenhowerism is translated into nothing more politically specific than a yen for dynamism and efficiency, the chief beneficiary a year hence is likely to be Mr. Nelson Rockefeller—whose family, as everyone knows, has been dispensing grants for years.

George Padmore

MOST people knew George Padmore best by Peter Abrahams' fictionalised portrait of him in *A Wreath for Udomo*. Abrahams' character, Tom—who, in the book, is an African, not a West Indian—is a picturesque, doctrinaire, but kindly and rather academic old nationalist who settles in freshly independent Pluralia because its emancipator, Udomo (Nkrumah), had, in his student days, looked to the older man for guidance. Tom is English to his nationalist fingertips, and completely cut off from the day-to-day life of the urban party militant in Pluralia, the bush farmer, even from the new élite. He finally becomes an embarrassment to Udomo.

There were enough of George Padmore's characteristics in Tom for him to be easily recognised by all his friends and acquaintances. Yet others have seen quite a different character. To the Negro-American journalist Roi Ottley, no less identified with the struggle against race prejudice than Abrahams or Padmore, the ageing West Indian writer on colonial problems appeared to be "a rabid

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revolutionary . . . forged in the crucible of U.S. race relations. . . . The most dangerous black radical alive . . . first-class conspirator, specialist in decoys, codes, and stratagems." (*No Green Pastures*, 1954.)

This strange and fascinating character, whom even his victims found difficult to dislike, was described in recent diplomatic reports from Accra as "the power behind the throne," the "*éminence grise* of Pan-Africanism," and the "architect of Nkrumah's African policy." On him, the diplomats blamed whatever appeared to them to be heavy-handed, conspiratorial, or tactless, in Ghana's bid to use her independence and influence to help set the rest of colonised Africa free from foreign domination.

MALCOLM NURSE, LATER KNOWN AS GEORGE PADMORE, was born fifty-six years ago in Trinidad, in the bad old days, when the pukka sahibs had far too much, the Indian traders had most of the rest, and the Afro-Caribbeans had little but humiliation. Padmore was tall, slim, and good-looking; he had Caucasian features but, by Caribbean standards, he ranked as "dark." (In Africa, he ranked as "brown.")

Young Malcolm was the son of a Government biologist who believed in "keeping one's place," "showing white folks respect" and thus getting one's annual increments, one's regular promotions, one's superannuation and, if you were lucky, a minor New Year's Honours award upon retirement. The son revolted completely against the father's accommodation attitudes, and showed every sign of being headed for trouble in the tight little world of Port-of-Spain. Mr. Nurse, senior, thought the best place for Malcolm to learn to come to terms with the racial situation would be the American Deep South. . . .

Out of the prejudiced but unviolent, theoretically egalitarian atmosphere of Trinidad, Nurse was pitched into Fisk University. In Tennessee, he found that survival might at any moment depend on "giving respect." This experience, which had shaken West Africans and West Indians before, and has shaken many more since, reacted on Malcolm exactly the opposite way from the one his father intended. Instead of returning to Trinidad to work, Nurse went to New York, joined the Communist Party—then an organisation which appeared to be serious about putting a total end to racial discrimination—and was the first Negro graduate of the party's Workers' School. He was given a salaried party job, and changed his name to George Padmore.

The thing most often said of George in his last years was that he was a "race animal, not a political animal." As with Nkrumah himself, the embers of irritation at (in Nkrumah's case, religious preoccupation with) the injustices of prejudice were fanned into the fire of revolutionary ardour by his experiences in the United States. Unlike Nkrumah, he was unable to accept or find satisfaction in the friendly racelessness of modern Ghana, since race conflict long ago became, and always remained, his *raison de vivre*.

In 1930, we find the promising Party worker in Moscow, accepting an exciting new job as head of the African Bureau of the Comintern. Padmore said that in the years that followed he built up a staff of several hundred, responsible for spreading the Communist gospel throughout Africa and wherever populations of African or partly African descent were to be found. The Bureau's journal, *The Negro Worker*, was published in English, French, and Spanish. In order to have the required authority in certain departments which assisted in his overseas activities, he was also appointed a colonel in the Red Army.

In 1931, Padmore began his long career of conference organisation: he brought together "about a thousand" Africans, West Indians, and Negro-Americans for the Conference of Negro Workers. The venue was an ominous one for a conference against racism—Hamburg, Germany, two years before Hitler's rise to power.

Padmore couriered across Europe in the service of the Party, organising and taking risks. We have some idea of the life of Communist couriers in the 'twenties and early 'thirties from Charles Plisnier's *Faux Passeports* and *Têtes sans visages*. Given the conspicuousness which is the most characteristic thing about *Négritude* in the white world, the risks must have been far greater in George's case than in most. In his last years, when he was pictured as an armchair revolutionary telling others how to risk their lives from the comfort of his London home or his stately bungalow in Accra, it would have been well to remember he passed the test of fire in his youth.

Not all his missions in the capitalist world were, however, of a conspiratorial nature: these were the days when Russian cars didn't run, Russian lighters didn't light, and Russian shirts were like ill-converted flour-sacks which lost their buttons at every wash. George was, as a consequence, asked to keep the V.I.P.s in the Kremlin supplied with the fruits of what is now "the West." Molotov used to ask him for Gillette razor-blades.

George, of course, went to Africa. His passport gave his occupation as "anthropologist." He recruited sixty volunteers for his Moscow staff and smuggled them back to the Kremlin. Some came from South Africa, which Colonel Padmore of the Red Army entered as "chauffeur" for a white junior officer who was, in reality, his assistant.

WITH THE RISE OF HITLER and the Party-line turns of the Popular Front period, Moscow reduced the African Bureau. Padmore protested. He was told he was a "black nationalist"—which had suddenly become a term of opprobrium. Finally, George resigned, taking a few of the faithful with him. The Bureau closed. It had achieved, like all the anti-colonial movements before the war, precisely nothing.

Padmore moved (of all places) to Berlin, whence he appealed to the British Labour Party for help. Labour was on the skids, Britain was still recovering from the Depression, and a party, which had never really regarded matters outside Britain as anything but a nuisance interfering with the real questions of the day, gave him a firm rebuttal. "They behaved like Tories," said George.

The inevitable happened, and Padmore the non-

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Aryan found himself in a Nazi prison, whence, alas, he was rescued by the imperialists. As a British citizen, the Consulate-General in Berlin had him freed and "repatriated" to London.

It was not long before Britain and her allies were at war with Hitler, and in battle with his theory of the blond master-race. This was the struggle which was to achieve what no anti-colonial movement had ever begun to achieve—the end of colonialism. From Padmore's home island of Trinidad came thousands of volunteers for the R.A.F. (where they won a fine reputation). For George, however, as for many others, this was a war to "preserve capitalism" and, *ipso facto*, "colonialism." He was a staunch, unwavering conscientious objector.

After the war, and his radical break with his Communist past, Padmore played a leading rôle in organising—with W. E. B. DuBois and Nkrumah—the Pan-African Congresses in Manchester. He wrote more pamphlets and books. He began to scent victory. But, nothing if not single-minded, Padmore still saw, in 1953, conflicts among "non-coloured" peoples as secondary to the main conflict he felt was coming. In that year he prophesied a "world war" between whites (presumably with Russia and America united at last) and the "coloured world" (presumably with China fighting Russia and India fighting Britain).

PADMORE WAS ALMOST as much an institution as a man. His tall, handsome looks had become a trifle off-putting with the years. The thin lips, the hard stare, had grown more severe with time. I had always, until recently, felt George resembled a magistrate of the Victorian type, in the days when the Bench could and did have miscreants flogged, and when the lecture from the magistrate could sting almost as sharply as the whip itself. But recently a West African leader referred to Padmore as "the Headmaster," and this is perhaps the best simile.

At this point, it is necessary to mention something which it is regrettable, in some ways, to mention at all. George had an impediment in his speech, which produced a sort of nasal lisp. It would not be unreasonable to see in this an extra, and natural, chip on Padmore's shoulder, an added explanation of his attitude to life and society.

In London, where George was to meet his devoted companion Dorothy, and where many future famous names like Nkrumah and Zik were to find George an encouragement and a source of advice, Padmore settled down into what are now the most obvious aspects of his character. He was appallingly British. His Cockney neighbours, with their seemingly innate desire to remind the proud and haughty that all people are much alike, called him "the Major" (they could not know he had been a colonel). When George told me (a Cockney, also) of this little piece of Cockney mockery of himself, he did it with a certain pride. Ghanaians share the Cockney desire to see the mighty shocked, and his staff in Accra called him "George VII." Although George, with his background, his career, and his last job, was clearly not "typically English," almost all his characteristics were British to the core; sometimes they were Britishisms exaggerated. It was only the particular variety of mixture of them which was unique.

HE HAD A PASSION FOR ORDER and efficiency. His critics in Accra would tell you his sense of efficiency was more theoretical than real, but probably this was placing too much blame on the boss, not enough on the subordinates.

In his photos, George looked younger than his fifty-six years. But in real-life close-ups, his sciatica aged him. Although George was the sort of man who would complain if kept waiting two minutes in a post-office, his painful sciatica was something I never heard him protest about. When the Conference of Independent African States was being arranged, he travelled all round the continent of Africa, one leg stretched out in front of him (as far as this was possible in passenger aircraft), his tight lips gritted; I was told he only mentioned his pain if someone asked, and then not willingly. He despised pity. His colour, his speech impediment, his semi-incurable condition—there were so many crosses to bear up his own personal Calvary, and which made him the rather terrifying figure which he seemed to people in his last years.

Padmore's attitude to Africans was not quite what one might have expected. Indeed, he sometimes seemed rather prejudiced. He would bawl at his staff *"Fauler Schwarzer! Fauler Schwarzer!"* (You lazy black!) I sat many times on his stoep, overlooking the neat garden near the State House, sipping tea (George's house was one of the very few in Accra where five o'clock tea was served with religious regularity) and heard him say: "They want the Germans here! Five years of German discipline would do wonders to this country! It would make 'em work! *'Du fauler Schwarzer!'* they'd say. 'Work or else!' We need the Germans here. . . ." He would give an apologetic laugh. "It would work wonders. These people—oh, I don't know!"

Yet was his attitude wrong? Was he not perhaps taking wise advantage of his *Négritude* to further a psychology whereby *Négritude* escapes from itself (which is *Négritude*'s ultimate aim)? Was he not, thus, treating Africans as he would treat any other people? Was he not acknowledging their equalness by insisting on standards that persons privileged with more average education, and other man-made advantages, are expected to maintain, and was he not thus helping to hasten the day when those standards would apply in Africa as well?

George was criticised on other grounds for which it is less easy to suggest a defence. He was tactless. He was very nearly humourless. His pleasant little nasal laugh was merely a façade, his one concession to society. Humour is the sergeant-major who can laugh at cartoons about sergeant-majors, and see a little of himself in them.

His shelves were full of pictures of his nationalist heroes, but how many of them he considered friends, whose misfortunes he would share, or whom he would stand by if they fell from the favour of their followers, was uncertain. . . . This

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sort of loyalty, which most of us consider far more important than politics, would, I believe, have seemed to George ridiculously sentimental.

When he philosophised on history, he divided the past into two groups of personalities—those who "channelled situations" and those who "created them." Many may feel that the second sort have never existed, but if there really have been people who have created revolutions where the movement to revolt did not clearly exist, then they must have been strong men, detached from human weaknesses and perhaps from humanity altogether.

Nkrumah hesitated about appointing this strange figure as his Adviser on African Affairs. We can only speculate why. Maybe he shared Peter Abrahams' view of "Tom," or at all events a similar view. Getting such a job involves a certain gift for intrigue—no one who likes the simple life would ever want a job with political implications in Ghana. Keeping such a job required infinitely more of that gift. An expatriate, after all, in modern Ghana, is an expatriate. He is suspect; he is expendable; if anything he does is a subject for disagreement, it is his motives, rather than his ability, which are questioned; he is equal before the law with Ghanaians, but in the *mores* of political expediency he is much less than equal. His relative equalness depends entirely on his usefulness. Expatriates in high and apparently trusted office worry constantly about "how they stand," and those who are in positions where they are paid to give advice and use initiative have an invidious and difficult status. Padmore had no tribe or family network to support him. He had no sister who was married to a minister. He did not understand Fante or Tshai, the languages in which ministers frequently converse. His *Négritude* was a double-edged sword: it defended him in some ways, but provoked special jealousies of its own.

YET HE WAS CHOSEN to lead the Ghanaian delegation to the extraordinary meeting of the steering committee (policy-making body) in Conakry of the All-African Peoples' Conference, in place of a powerful minister, Kojo Botsio. Whether Botsio welcomed this, we do not know. Padmore flew back from this meeting, in which the now well-known revolt of other African leaders against him began, in time to join the Premier on the ship going back to Conakry, and accompanied Nkrumah on his triumphal tour of Guinea—an honour accorded to only one minister.

When most of the other delegates insisted that Ghana's delegation to the steering committee meeting in Tunis be led by a Granaian, Padmore persuaded Nkrumah not to back down, but to boycott the meeting altogether—an extraordinary demonstration of power, which much impressed the Accra diplomatic corps. When I reported Ghana's decision not to attend (and her reasons) in the *Sunday Times*, George had me instantly expelled from Ghana.

At the end, in other words, he was on the tightrope. He was never so powerful in Ghana, never so poorly quoted in the market of African prestige. In a few years he changed from the hospitable "elder" in London, whose home was "Nationalism House"—where future martyrs could leaf through his extensive African library, and potential Prime Ministers help Dorothy wash up in the kitchen. At the end he was the stern Adviser (with a capital A) with the tricky task of telling Africans how to run their affairs. George had numerous enemies in high places in Ghana, but he also enjoyed considerable support from the left-wing element in the Government Party. Whether he had actual friends, no one knows. All in all, he struck one as a lonely figure.

One relic of the Moscow past which persisted to his last days was Padmore's love of the "plot" atmosphere. To-day West Africa, as an area, is independent or nearly so, and "plotting" as such could be limited to the exquisite Palais-Bourbon type intrigues which go on within the French West African assemblies. But, for George, even an exchange of economic views between, say, Ghana and Mali, would have had to be conducted as though the Tsarist police were outside the door.

His greatest weakness, in his position of power, was that he was cut off from ordinary people. He was cut off from them because he did not very much like them. They were part of a design, no more. He was intolerant of their weaknesses and defects. One of the ways his distrust for the common man appeared was his depressing formality, which showed up in his conversations, his letters, his method of running an office. One felt that when he arrived at the converted 1900-period

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bungalow-on-stilts which was his bureau, a gold-tasselled standard ought to be broken at the mast-head and a leopard-skinned guard of Sudanic Askaris should spring to attention with mousetrap speed. George Padmore, bless him, would have loved it.

The creation of an office of "African Affairs" was undoubtedly a good idea. Ghana's External Affairs (now Foreign) Ministry has relations with nations, not colonies; it is impeccably run, and every bit as respectable as it ought to be. One could not imagine it exchanging letters with Um Thiobe in his hide-out in the Seaboard Sanaga mountains, or even with a potential Prime Minister like Tom Mboya. But "African Affairs," which does handle these matters, was run with a bold attempt to look like a chancery.

In different hands, "African Affairs" would have been accepted by the diplomatic corps in Accra, but under Padmore there was little likelihood of this. In different hands, it would have been an unofficial adjunct of protocol, taking off their diplomatic hands everything that could not be dealt with officially. Instead, Foreign Affairs and African Affairs inevitably became two rivals, disapproving of each other.

AT A GARDEN PARTY RECENTLY, George said to me, "I hope they never abolish chieftaincy in Ghana," as an Omanhene went by under his gilded parasol, preceded by his mace-bearing Linguist and followed by his Swordbearers and supporters. Chieftaincy has universal respect, and is meticulously respected by Europeans. George had an observant eye for everything that gives Africans respect from the "white world." His manorial formality, the things he did which led to his being called "The Major" or "George VII," were designed to inspire respect.

George was highly "race" conscious. He even had racial theories about the inherent degrees of race-consciousness among various white nations. George wanted to be accepted for what he was by the white world, but not accepted in it. He was too proud to want less than the first, and too proud to be thought guilty of asking for the latter. He wanted *Négritude* to escape from itself, but could not live in a world without *Négritude*, not in Trinidad or London, not in Berlin or Moscow or Accra. Will Africa ever look upon his like again?

Russell Warren Howe

The B.B.C. Image

By T. R. Fyvel

PERHAPS one should gently assume that the proportion of nonsense in Mr. Henry Fairlie's attack on the BBC [ENCOUNTER, August] derives from his fixation on the conspiratorial theory of history. At moments his notion of "the Establishment" as a sinister force emasculating British culture via the BBC comes, indeed, perilously close to the view of the late Dr. Goebbels of "the Jews" as a conspiracy playing a parallel rôle in Germany. If this comparison sounds far-fetched, so do some of Mr. Fairlie's charges. It is surely only prosaically obvious that the BBC of to-day shares in (a) the perennial problem of all big broadcasting organisations—how to keep bureaucracy in place, and (b) the current problem of most British institutions of having to do some pretty hard re-thinking in this age of rapid social change. But when we come to this, it seems to me that the record of the BBC can compare favourably with that of its counterparts elsewhere in quite a number of ways. The following, for instance, are a dozen points in the BBC's favour, jotted down as they came to me—I was myself almost surprised by their number.

1. *Musical Life.* Take only one pre-war event—the founding of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1930. Through this orchestra, which first broke with the "deputy" practice in British orchestral life, revitalised the Proms, and was given three times the repertoire of the average orchestra, and, altogether, through the policy of its music department in introducing young British composers and *avant-garde* music, the BBC was the largest single factor in that renaissance of British music which turned London, to the general surprise, into a world centre of music.

2. *Wartime News.* Tastes in news presentation may have changed, but let us not forget how during the war the BBC built up an individual style of precise, unemotional news bulletins, keyed to Britain's special position in the war, which not only gained unrivalled listener credence (during an Apennine winter at a U.S. headquarters tuned in to the BBC, I noted how intelligent Americans preferred its bulletins to their own) but also became a post-war model for radio stations from Hamburg to Tel Aviv.

3. *The European Service.* Simultaneously the BBC set new standards for foreign-language broadcasts listened to throughout Europe and beyond. Its German Service, outplaying Nazi propaganda by a technique of truthfully admitting every British reverse and steadily gathering millions of German listeners, was above all a *tour de force* which by the end of the war had made commentators like Lindley Fraser familiar figures to vast numbers of Germans.

4. *The Spirit of '45.* While the wartime Light Programme relayed to the Forces was largely a Pop programme for the Other Ranks' Mess, I was continually surprised by the amount of serious

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social and political current-affairs material successfully introduced into it. Springing from the grass-roots level of producers and script-writers, and not from any "Establishment," this trend had to my mind quite an influence on the electoral mood of 1945.

5. *The Feature as Art Form.* To turn to post-war days—if the future trend of sound radio is to-day unsure, for the record it should be said that the BBC broke quite new ground by giving writers of the standing of Louis MacNeice, Rayner Heppenstall, and Christopher Sykes a free hand to turn the "radio feature" into a living new art form pleasing to countless listeners.

6. *The Third Programme.* This is by no means always to my taste, but if ever the charge of being Establishment-minded is misapplied, it surely is to the Third, which has been *avant-gardiste* almost to the point of obscurity. Anouilh, Ionesco, Beckett, Brecht were all introduced long before the sluggish London commercial theatre had even heard of them; Dylan Thomas was given his first mass-audience and regular income; and so on.

7. *Third Programme Exports.* Remarkable as it sounds, it is reported that through steady re-broadcasts from American university radio stations (which partly live on this material) the American audience for the Third is larger than the British. Nor should one forget the overseas readers of *The Listener* (which Lionel Trilling once described to me as the most directly useful to him of all the weeklies he receives).

8. *The Post-war European Service.* Whatever the policy arguments about the BBC broadcasts to countries behind the Iron Curtain (and they have been raised by Mr. K. and others), there is no doubt that they are both an integral part of BBC news and comment and have millions of faithful listeners—two essential facts in any realistic consideration of the BBC.

9. *The Suez Crisis.* I happened to be travelling through four European countries during the two weeks of the Suez crisis, and I could observe how impressed Continental listeners were by the fact that the BBC reported Opposition attacks upon Government policy as faithfully as the Government's own statements. As may be recalled, there was some controversy over this—but it could hardly be called Establishment-mindedness.

10. *Television Documentary.* The question of polemic on television is most tricky (my American friends assure me that their free-for-all on commercial television is no guide to freedom). To my mind, the BBC's "Panorama" programme in its heyday provided at least one model of social and political reportage that was fair, but, within agreed limits, hard-hitting—the latter attested by the protests pouring in from the South African Government, the motor industry, the E.T.U., etc. I think "Panorama" also created a new image of sophisticated interviewing. As proof, in the elections both parties dropped hammed political speeches and turned to "Panorama" techniques (and sometimes even interviewers).

11. *Culture on the Telly.* On this equally tricky theme of projecting "culture" on a truly mass-medium, which I don't think has yet been solved, I can personally recall a few interesting BBC successes, such as Cartier's production of *1984*, which for the first time boldly introduced George Orwell to the British people, or the popularisation of archæology through the unexpected personage of Sir Mortimer Wheeler.

12. *Amateur Sport.* This I want to make most strongly: in direct opposition to the popular Press, whose sports pages are through the tie-up with professionalism and gambling becoming increasingly yellow, BBC television policy has consistently supported and encouraged British amateur sport. Mainly through BBC television, previous minority sports like athletics, amateur boxing, competitive swimming, show-jumping, and winter sports have been popularised among millions of young viewers.

The above are a round-dozen points in favour of the BBC, chosen from a personal viewpoint. I quite agree that one could, if so inclined, as readily formulate a dozen criticisms, including charges of timidity, stuffiness, and bureaucracy; but I think that to weigh the merits against the de-merits would be an extremely complex task. After all, except in the imagination of journalists like Mr. Fairlie, the BBC is anything but a monolithic organisation—quite the opposite, its various sections are at times almost eccentrically going their own way. If there had been a different start, could the manifold activities of the BBC have been carried out in a better way, and, if so, precisely how? Considered in the context of British life and with the relevant comparisons with broadcasting in other countries, this might be the theme of a highly interesting study. But it seems one on which Mr. Fairlie has not even begun to do his homework.

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FROM A DIARY

I FIND myself dizzy trying to follow the procedure regarding the re-admission at the Frankfurt Congress last September of the Hungarian Centre to the International P.E.N. Club. Even "re-admission" is a dangerous word, liable to bring down on me the full weight of Mr. David Carver's indignation,* because really the branch was never expelled, only suspended, and what we have to deal with (to employ the formula contrived by M. André Chamson, the then International President) is the "suspension of the suspension." Our correspondent in *From the Other Shore* got caught in a tangled web when he wrote that the Hungarian centre had been suspended in Tokyo (September 1957) when, as Mr. Carver now points out, what happened at that time was a *decision to investigate it.* Moreover, the Hungarian delegates did not come to London *before* Tokyo, but *after.*

If the reader has managed to read the above paragraph will he please now look back and learn the essential facts by heart, before going on, or sooner or later he may be accused by Mr. Carver of being guilty not merely of "muddled thinking" but "a conscious or unconscious desire to convey a false picture." All this is made worse, Mr. Carver goes on, getting redder and redder, by the fact that an editor of ENCOUNTER—Tweedledum or Tweedledee —one of them—though Mr. Carver was too excited to see which—and they both look exactly alike anyway—except that one is dark and has a beard, the other very red, very white, very tall and beardless —one of them *was* there in Frankfurt—a guest of honour—with ample time to get to know all this, and on his return to correct our correspondent.

Worst crime of all, our correspondent accuses the P.E.N.'s "Committee of Five" (which spun the procedural web) of "indulging in *Realpolitik*" than which, thunders Mr. Carver, "nothing could be more false."

Probably the misunderstanding between us could be cleared away by Professor Sheldon, the sociologist who specialises in dividing human beings into types whose behaviour is conditioned by their physiognomy. Tweedledum, Dr. Sheldon would explain, is the visual-aural type, whereas Mr. Carver is perhaps the cerebrotonic. Tweedledum simply sees what he sees, hears what he hears; Mr. Carver is the chairmanly type through the channels of whose brain times and places and dates and categories and procedures go like yards of ticker tape. This tape knots itself round things which are the objects of decisions taken by the P.E.N. Club, and Mr. Carver cannot see the thing for the tape.

I AM BEING UNFAIR to Mr. Carver—who is an energetic, generous, and helpful person, in practice extremely concerned at the London P.E.N. centre with helping refugees. But all the same his response to the violent reaction of people, who have stood or sat or been tortured in political prisons, to the very procedural proceedings at Frankfurt, seems to me strange.

In my rôle of Tweedledum let me describe what happened. The Congress was opened by M. André Chamson, the International President, who made a long speech from the chair with palpably no object but to have Mr. György Bölöni, Mr. Ladislaus Gerblyes, and Mr. Laszlo Kery—the representatives from Budapest—elected with as little debate and fuss as possible. M. Chamson adopted a special oratorical technique of persuasion—a kind of artful disintoxication of hard feelings. "Let us de-emotionalise the debate," he began. Coming from a chairman who can scarcely open his mouth without declaring himself *"profondément ému"* by something or other (who in Japan declared to his mostly Asian audience *"nous sommes les coupables,"* under the impression of an emotion which apparently persuaded him that the Japanese were poor Asians once colonised by brutal Europeans—who in his concluding address in Germany exclaimed, with his hand upon his heart, upon the hearts of all the P.E.N. Club, *"nous sommes tous presque amoureux des Allemands"*), coming from M. André Chamson, the effect was anæsthetising—the operation could be performed.

A few delegates then made speeches, most of them agreeing with the International President. After this there was a queue of perhaps six or seven delegates wanting to speak, several of whom had passed years in prison and who therefore may just possibly have felt qualified to represent a speechless line of writers in Hungary—some of them members of the P.E.N. Club—accumulating between them at the time of the debate 152 years of imprisonment, quite apart from four sentences of life imprisonment (Istvan Bibo, Jozsef Gali, Gyula Obersovsky, György Adam) which I cannot include in the total as I do not know how long they will run.

One or two exiles did speak, incoherently. Just as one was preparing to try further the patience of the international meeting of the world's consciences by speaking on behalf of these entombed alive, an outsize Belgian lawyer, M. Robert Goffin, trundled to the fore, and shouted at the top of his voice that this could not go on, enough had been said, we all knew that the matter was decided, we did not have to hear any more, and a vote should be taken. M. Chamson, Pontius-Pilate-like washing his hands, decided to take a vote whether the discussion should go on or not. There was a brief discussion of the discussion about the suspension of the suspension, and then a suspension of the discussion.

AFTER all this, Mr. Carver is simply staggered by the suggestion that the P.E.N. Club plays at power-politics. Well. Our correspondent did not say it employed them, he said it played at them. In the *couloirs* (as they say) of the Goethe Haus the following arguments were being whispered: that if the P.E.N. did not re-admit the Hungarian Centre, UNESCO would find it difficult to go on subsidising the P.E.N.; that (horror of horrors) a

* See his letter in this issue, p. 84.

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brand-new International P.E.N. Club might be formed behind the Iron Curtain. But the trump card was the argument that the Hungarians had promised to be good boys and speak up for the jailed Hungarian writers. More: a telegram to the Hungarian Government would be sent appealing to the Kadar Government for an act of clemency to Hungarian writers in prison. And, now, Mr. Carver writes, the telegram has had a "significant" result: after a long interval a telegram has come back. It says: "AT PRESENT YOUR REQUEST CANNOT BE FULFILLED."

Well, perhaps this is not power-politics; let us call it powerless-politics; but it is some kind of politics surely for the P.E.N. Club to contravene its own charter (which would oblige it to call upon the Hungarian members to do what they cannot do; without being tried for treason—"pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong").

One can sympathise with Mr. Carver in the world of the cold war whose split is reflected in the member countries, many of which have two branches—the home team and the exiles. This, together with the pressures of International Organisations like UNESCO which pretends to bring together again what the cold war has put apart, puts the P.E.N. Club in a decidedly political situation, in which tact and diplomacy and compromise have to be used. I think there might conceivably be reasons for taking the Hungarians back. But the chief one offered at Frankfurt—that to do so might influence the Kadar régime to show "clemency" to the Hungarian writers in jail was not, as was pretended, "realistic." That an organisation of writers should fool themselves into thinking it was, calls to mind Auden's lines:

> *Intellectual disgrace*
> *Stares from every human face.*

WRITERS ARE, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, involved in politics, but surely after the experience of the 'thirties, of Stalinism, and of Hungary, they should beware of being dupes. They ought to know what they are doing and why they are doing it. A possible justification for re-admitting the Hungarians might be—not that doing so would influence the Kadar régime—but that nothing that was not lost already would be lost by doing so and that something might be gained. For good or bad, what would be gained would be the presence of three representatives from Budapest. To pretend that Messrs. Bölöni, Gerblyes, and Kery would go back to Budapest as evangelists of the Charter is absurd. It is more likely that Budapest would evangelise through them. In fact it began to do so—mildly—at Frankfurt. One of the P.E.N. Club delegates told me that he had been informed by the Hungarians that Tibor Déry was a "political agitator"—he had suggested to workers that they should have the right to strike—and, in this case, my interlocutor went on, difficult as it was for us to understand their point of view, we should try to do so and not make a fuss about freeing Déry. Did anyone ever hear of anyone using arguments like this before? I have spent thirty years listening to them.

If an international community of writers exists, surely the most important thing of all is that it should cultivate the utmost awareness of the fate of those of its own members who are silenced, oppressed, imprisoned. Yet at Frankfurt the procedure of rushing through a decision about re-admitting the Hungarian branch was given priority over any discussion of what was happening to the victims of the Hungarian Government. Every member of the P.E.N. should ask himself what he would like his international colleagues to do if *he* were in the situation of Tibor Déry. This question was not posed at Frankfurt. It would have been "emotionalising" the situation.

All this is related, of course, to the failure of the P.E.N. Congresses to represent world literature. It is irrelevant whether they are "jamborees," but relevant that apart from the tourism and enjoyable outings, and a wonderful performance of *Elektra*, and some very enjoyable hospitality, the literary discussions followed a system of choosing speakers according to some strange kind of protocol. This meant almost total disregard for the interest of the theme under discussion ("Literature and the Age of Science").

AM I taking the P.E.N. too seriously? But the Charter takes it seriously, and an organisation which solemnly, year after year, investigates, suspends, and un-suspends and re-suspends Hungarians, obviously takes itself seriously. Moreover, the English branch has set an admirable example of the kind of work that such an organisation should do. It organises excellent discussions and treats writers as colleagues to be encouraged in achievement and supported in exile and distress. I criticise the P.E.N. Congress by applying to it standards which are implicit in the P.E.N. Charter, and in the English P.E.N. organisation, and because I think that if there were not a P.E.N. Club it would be necessary to invent one. A new International President, Alberto Moravia, has been elected; and I can scarcely imagine Mr. Moravia being happy in his office if the discussion of what are serious themes by colleagues of so high calling sinks to the level of the Frankfurt P.E.N. Congress.

But the tourist side of the outing was excellently provided for by our Frankfurt and *Bundesrepublik* hosts. It is possible perhaps to regard P.E.N. Congresses simply as outings for the Marquise Cécile de Chabannes and her Marquis, M., Mme., and Mlle Jacques Charles, Jean Follain, Paul Fuval, Nina Herrera de Narvaez, Pierre Labracheris, Marcelle de Laguardille-Fournage, Réné Lauret, Jean Lebrau, Marie-Louise Lédé, Louis Le Sidaner, and all the other distinguished French representatives of literature. At all events it was jolly to see them in a bus together, with M. Goffin, their Belgian colleague, in the fore, while Tibor Déry and Gyula Hay sat in prison.

Stephen Spender

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ROUTLEDGE

and Kegan Paul

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A Dialogue with Durrell

By Kenneth Young

LAWRENCE DURRELL is a small, handsome man with a permanent sun-tan, deep-set blue eyes, faded fair hair, and a blunt nose. He dresses without eccentricity; speaks with an accent that is Foreign Office rather than BBC; has, one hears, a temper. I had long wanted to meet him: his four interlinked novels about Alexandria—*Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, and the forthcoming *Clea*—seemed to me major works with a powerful originality, the seal of success upon one of the most continuously interesting literary careers of the last twenty years. Lines from Durrell's poetry I have found in my head at quite improbable moments—

Something died out by this river; but it seems
Less than a nightingale ago. . . .

My uncle has gone beyond astronomy,
He sleeps in the music-room of the Host. . . .

It was, again, an essay by Durrell years ago that led me to Dr. Georg Groddeck who became a prime influence in my life; it was Durrell's poetry and prose which put my own long experience of Greece into memorable words; and, in poor repayment, I had sought to pass on my appreciation.

Eventually, a few weeks ago, we did meet in London and our exchanges, begun over lunch, continued in his hotel with a tape-recorder present, and passed on to a correspondence. Durrell does not often visit England. He has lived abroad for two decades—mainly in and around Greece and Egypt, with brief excursions to Yugoslavia and the Argentine. Indeed, he has a slight "thing" about England, "the prohibitions and anxieties of its Puritan culture which causes a deficit of sexual and emotional experience," and what his character, Pursewarden, refers to as its "frenzy of propriety . . . all the passionate adjustment of dress that goes on." He himself speaks of it as a "love-hate complex." Durrell agreed with my guess that this sprang from the tension between two obvious incompatibilities: the fact that he was born and spent his early years in the still Kiplingesque India, but also happened to be born an Irishman with all the Irishman's divided mind about England.

—IN YOUR *novels you have written mainly about foreign people in foreign parts, and your English characters are almost entirely expatriates: do you feel that you are out of touch with English character and life to-day? Do you ever feel drawn to write about English people in England now?*

As you know, I am a colonial, born in India, and there is nothing more tenacious than a colonial who has to live away from England: we read the English papers far more closely than most people in England. I keep fairly closely in touch with English affairs. I must say, though, that as a novelist English life does not appeal to me. It seems rather constricted.

—But then as an English novelist, are you not always going to be writing at an angle to the English universe if you are more or less constantly abroad?

If you'll forgive my saying so, I think this is one of our cardinal errors, namely, to assume that art is a form of purely patriotic response to a given place. I think that is probably a reflection of our rather parochial attitude in refusing to admit we are part of Europe. I personally would like to feel I was an English-European.

—You are now more or less permanently settled in France. Will you write again about Greece or Alexandria, or do you feel that your quartet of novels and your travel books have flushed them from your system?

I have not made up my mind about this. Certainly places go dead on you after you have done a book on them, though often they come alive again after a lapse of time.

—Why do you think your "Alexandria Quartet" has had such a prize-winning success in France and Germany? Why, more particu-

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larly, is your verse-play, Sappho, *never produced here, having almost simultaneous productions in three German towns this year?*

The Germans have a highly-developed metaphysical sense, whereas we tend to think of philosophy as a systematic arrangement of ideas. I think what some English readers find "enigmatic" in my novels—in Pursewarden's remarks, for example—the Germans find metaphysically exciting. But they could not have produced a Locke or a Hume.

—Would you say you were essentially a writer of ideas?

I would rather say that I was a poet who had stumbled into prose, but of course ideas mean a great deal to me. Groddeck is particularly precious to me as he represents a type (doctor, poet, priest) which I feel is going to come again as soon as the sciences realise how near they are to one another.

*—*SOMEWHERE *in* Justine, *you reveal that Darley, one of the main characters, has the same initials as yourself—"L.G.D.," and in any case "Darley" isn't too far from "Durrell." Do you mean by this that Darley is your mouthpiece?*

It's not autobiographical in that sense. It's a private joke with myself, as it were. But sometimes this sort of thing helps you to identify a bit, where you want, for example, to feel how your character is going to feel. The situations, of course, are imaginary. When you read *Clea* I hope you will feel that Darley was necessarily as he was in *Justine* because the whole business of the four books, apart from other things, shows the way an artist grows up. The books are really a sort of thesis in poetic illumination. I wanted to show, in the floundering Darley, how an artist may have first-class equipment and still not be one.

—But isn't there a contradiction here? In the preface to Balthazar *you say your central topic is "an investigation of modern love." Now you say you are really doing a portrait of an artist growing up. . . .*

Yes, but it ties in in numerous ways. For example, I am trying to illustrate the bi-sexual Eros which Freud disinterred after it had been lost, virtually since Plato. That is why I deal so freely with love in all its aspects. But in the last volume (*Clea*) I am trying to develop the idea that the sexual act is our "knowing" machine. It is the *point d'appui* of the psyche; and you can determine much about a culture or a civilisation from its approach to sex.

—How near would you say you are to D. H. Lawrence's idea that it is only through sex that you get close to the real universe?

I have been very much influenced by Lawrence as a writer, but not as a person of ideas. Lawrence, in spite of his heroic and magnificent tilt at the conventions of the day and his attempt to deepen and widen consciousness (which he certainly did), remained at heart a Puritan. There is still a touch of Calvinism about his insistence on certain sexual *motifs*. His passion about marriage, for example. He does not carry it to scientific lengths. He does not say that, biologically, monogamy appears to be the rule. He ascribes his ideas very largely to his own psyche.

—Yes, but surely he is also saying that in the sexual act you have this special—what he called "blood"—knowledge?

True, but I feel that to cut off the head and exclude the reason in order to locate the affective nature of man in the abdomen, as he did, is to make the river flow backwards. Underneath it I discern another attempt to foist on us Rousseau's "Noble Savage." My notion of the affective flow is upwards, a notion I have borrowed from the Hindus. Lawrence cuts the tree down, and emphasises only the dark roots; I would like the tree to blossom the other way round, and this can come about only from the happy marriage of reason and intuition. Lawrence's complete rejection of all the scientific data available to us to-day is rather like retiring to Bournemouth on a pension!

—You have, in fact, a bias towards a more pagan view? I think this emerges in your poem, "Deus Loci."

Yes, that is a sort of little sex god of the Mediterranean. The thing I have never marched well with is all the Hebraic gibber we have incorporated into our view of Christianity: for example, atonement, redemption. I am afraid I am a pre-atonement, pre-redemption, and pre-original-sin man. I don't think Lawrence was.

—Except, perhaps, in The Man Who Died?

The tragedy is that in *The Man Who Died* —it's his most perfect short story—Lawrence found a way out and phrased it beautifully—but he didn't live to incorporate it in any great work of art. Because his health failed him. Whereas, if he had had ten more years, we would have seen an artist of incomparable stature and importance to Europe.

—You feel, then, that Lady Chatterley's Lover (*which followed* The Man Who Died) *was a failure?*

Yes. The gallantry resides in what he tried to do rather than in what he achieved.

—Talking of Lady Chatterley, *would you have wished—censorship apart—to have been as explicit in your descriptions of the sexual act?*

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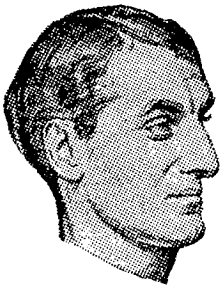

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Or, come to that, as explicit as your old friend, Henry Miller?

No, I wouldn't have been as tough, being different temperamentally from Miller.

—Do you feel, incidentally, that stylistically or otherwise, you have been influenced by Miller?

Yes. See *The Black Book** for a strong influence of Miller's tremendous, rampaging prose style. I have also been influenced by him in my life and not merely as an artist. His courageous refusal to do anything except what he feels he must has always been an example to me. It seems to me that a real artist should have a sense of vocation, and be ready to die in the streets, as Miller so nearly has done more than once, rather than turn his hand to the thousand compromises which we all live by—journalism, teaching, B.B.C., diplomacy. . . .

—Getting back to your novels: you were talking about reason just now. Now you say in one of the notes to your novels that de Sade—from whom you take your epigraphs—"demonstrates pure rationalism." A hard saying, surely?

What I meant was that I see in de Sade the literary twin of the French Revolution, and, of course, following from the French Revolution, of Marxism, which are both attempts to impose purely rationalised systems on the body politic.

—Don't follow: I thought de Sade was a specialist in sexual excess?

Perhaps, the remark was a little enigmatic. I interpret it to myself this way: all de Sade's excesses were *"voulus."* They were a scientific investigation into sex. His object—and he proclaims it all the time—is to try and show deliberately that there is no morality in nature. He is quite rightly regarded in France as a failed religious man.

—Now what about your statement that you are "attempting to interrogate human values through an honest representation of human passions?"

Well, I believe that human beings best reveal themselves in their relations to one another through the *point faible*, the sexual relation. . . .

—You have called it a psychic act, a "biological paraphrase of the truth." I think you make Justine remark that only in the act of physical love is the full flavour of personality revealed.

Yes. But I wanted to go one step further, and by my representation of the play of human passions to suggest that the human personality as such is an illusion.

—You have examined the scientific bases for that point of view in discussing Freud, Einstein, Heisenberg, and the "space-time continuum" in your Key to Modern Poetry.

I'm afraid I made a mistake there as a result of following Wyndham Lewis' *Time and Western Man* which first led me in the direction of this kind of thinking. I confused Bergsonian time with Einsteinian time. It only dawned on me years later that time wedded to matter in the Einsteinian conjunction is not precisely Bergsonian time, because the notions of time between Plato and Bergson had not changed very much. Indeed Bergson (under whom Proust studied) said he could not understand Einsteinian time and that the continuum was an enigma to him.

—That brings me to something that worries me. You say in your preface to Balthazar *that you are basing the scheme of your four novels on the relativity proposition—on the space-time continuum. Are you not in fact trying to reflect in a literary way mathematical concepts in the form of your novels, and is it really possible to do so?*

Your feeling may be justified. I had a letter from a mathematician saying: "Dear Boy, Poppycock! The continuum is a mathematical concept and to try and make literature from such things is rubbish." He may well be right, too. All I know is that I might have addressed the same sort of letter to Mr. Mercator about his projection and said: "Dear Boy, This is not a sphere." To which he would have replied that "it wasn't intended as a sphere but you see what I'm getting at." I am simply using the continuum as one of the most important cosmological formulations of the day to do a poetic dance upon, as it were.

But if I do the interior linking of the books right they should raise one terrific problem, namely, personality. In this stereophonic context, I think it does raise a question in your mind as to whether the human personality is not a selective fiction or a polite figment. Raising questions like the Principle of Indeterminacy affects the whole basis of human personality—and you come out in Hindu metaphysics!

—Yes, I see all that, but . . .

If the experiment comes off, if you have all four books held in your cranium, you should get a notion of the continuum. I am using human beings instead of figures. Consequently, subject to all the problems of just pure novel writing, I am trying to illuminate them from five or six different sides.

AT THIS point, I suggested that much of what he was after had been done, and in purely literary terms, by Ford Madox Ford. I

* Published—in France only—in 1938.

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lent Durrell Ford's *The Good Soldier*; he read it overnight, and then wrote:

I'm so glad I didn't read *The Good Soldier* before writing *Justine* or I might never have finished her! This novel is an eye-opener with its brilliant organisation and gathering momentum; it's fit to put beside the best of our time. How the devil didn't I know his work?

—The point is, his form is all tucked in and painless. It worries me to feel that after you have ended your novel you add what you call "Consequential Data"; they are sort of afterthoughts and I feel they spoil what should be more of a Mozartian weave.

I think the ragged ends, you know, illustrate the principle of Indeterminacy. This is deliberate. I deliberately scribbled down at the end of *Clea*, for instance, five or six pieces of data which themselves could make five or six more novels, either interpolated or exterpolated—this isn't to infuriate the reader but simply to indicate that it would be possible to expand the Quartet without it becoming *roman fleuve*. I felt it worth trying to get away from the serial form of the *roman fleuve* which after all only illustrates another form of cancer—the wilful multiplication of healthy cells in a Jules Romains over thirty volumes! I can't have made a worse failure than that (if I *have* failed) because he at the end has to apologise for not winding up the fate of nearly thirty characters!

—The Quartet isn't a failure: it's a success—and not only d'estime. *You have a wide public.*

Well, I'm trying to give them value for money, even in ordinary Maria Marten terms, melodrama, suspense, plots. But, of course, I'm taking all sorts of risks: it is extremely dangerous to write one book and then write another which contradicts it entirely and almost line-by-line!

—All that comes off: to read the "other side" of the story is always fascinating. So, of course, is the writing itself—those magnificent descriptions of the duck-shoot, the ball, and so on. Some critics complain that these are too much like set-pieces, stuck on, as it were.

I am always conscious of being over-lush in that way. I can only plead that it comes naturally to me. These novels were done under terrific pressure, financial pressure, I had to get some money for them, and I did them in a very short space of time. *Balthazar* was written in six weeks and went to the printer as it was. So if the lushness is there it is not due to my overworking the material. But I would like to put in a plea for good writing in the sense of elegant writing. There is no reason why we shouldn't have some polish, manner, and style. Writing

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has become so like galvanised iron nowadays that even quite good books are sometimes terribly difficult to read because of the pedestrian notation of the prose.

—Of course the people who criticise you often brush off your novels as "experimental 'twenties stuff."

It depends whether you are content to be a minor Proust. I wanted to try and make a break-through. The obsession with time has led rather to a blocked drain. When you think of the enormous sort of word-bog of *Finnegans Wake* or the over-elaboration of Virginia Woolf, I think I move rather smartly to the attack compared with them, At any rate, I have the comfortable feeling of having done something to the top of my bent: if it isn't good enough, I will try again. But I can't do any better at the moment.

—You are planning to write a comic novel: on the lines of your Esprit de Corps *and* Stiff Upper Lip?

No. I would like to do something big, rambling, and perhaps rather bawdy. My theory is if you get too priggish and rule out the bawdry, you also lose the tenderness. The two things march together, as they did for the Elizabethans. I want to do a selection of the more robust Elizabethan prose writers. I wish we could recapture the enormous range of feeling the Elizabethans enjoyed, from the utmost vulgarity and bawdry to the greatest delicacy, sophistication, and refinement. Do you think that if people understood half of Ophelia's speeches they would allow *Hamlet* to be played before schoolchildren to-day? Merciful is ignorance.

—How exactly do you write—pen, typewriter? To a plan, or in concentrated bursts?

Prose with a typewriter, poetry with a pen. When I get going on a novel I like a long, regular spell at it without visitors or interruptions. I can work up to fourteen hours a day. I try to strike an average, and not fall below 1,500 words a day. My Foreign Service experience turned me into a trained journalist, and I could write, if necessary, in the *Daily Express* news-room. Now I am free, I get up at six and try to break the back of the morning's work by midday, when the postman comes.

—Any more specific difference between poetic and prosaic composition?

My first concern as a novelist is to get two-thirds of the book done before I start niggling and altering. I find that the form of a book and its balance doesn't become manifest before page 200. But poems are like stalactites—you have to sit around waiting for them to form, they don't respond to being hurried. But novels can be pushed on by the scruff of the neck, even if you have a splitting headache. You can always go back and heighten the colour of your adjectives, put a bit of rouge into a weak passage, tidy up and chop later. A poem is like fishing where you have to get the whole fish out of the water —and it mustn't be a boot when you get it. That takes an awful lot of time—and you don't get relatively paid enough to do it.

—Will you not write any more poems?

I hope to do so.

—Have you any unpublished poems?

My only unpublished poems are quite unpublishable except in Paris. [Among these are some songs that his character, Scobie, is meant to have sung.] I tear up a lot, but having just been confronted by my forthcoming *Collected Poems* I conclude that I don't tear up enough!

—About your poetry: how much of an influence was Eliot? Less, I would guess, than Auden?

I don't think I'm an important enough poet even to think in those terms. My *Collected Poems* are hardly longer than those of Edward Thomas. Certainly Auden and Eliot are the masters of us all. I found Eliot's earlier manner chilly. I even tried to write a satire on him to show my disapproval of his work. Then I found he was inimitable which made me realise he was a great poet. One has one's likes and dislikes. I dislike Pope but Byron would knock me down for saying so—and I like Byron!

—What about the Four Quartets?

It's the finest long mystical poem in English since Crashaw—the finest ever, I should say.

—Doesn't your own work tend towards mysticism?

Yes, though it's temerarious to say so. But the Christian European form doesn't appeal to me with its strong self-mutilation angle. We've built a wailing wall in the middle of the European psyche. As for mysticism, I prefer something like the Sufi doctrine. I'm a dervish. I dance, or try to.

—Yours is perhaps more of a nature mysticism?

I think the Greek landscape is absolutely saturated by intimations of the basic type of mind that grew up in it, and in Greece you feel the pagan world is very close. Where I live now, in the South of France, you feel something equally strong—you feel Nostradamus,

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the Provençal singers, the intense savagery, and a different sort of mysticism. In Dorset, where I was living last year, the Druids were pretty close, I thought. Pre-history in Britain needs a come-back. I am only sorry we have muddled it all up via Blake and company. England is saturated with these kinds of intimation but they get overlaid by theological and historical background.

—You saw a good deal of Dylan Thomas at one time?

Yes, he was a very honest man, though I was a bit shocked to find the amount of mutation of adjectives that went on, but his wonderful Welsh bardic quality kept him well on the ball.

—No affinities there?

We used to have slight arguments, because I maintained that poetry should try and *say* something; Dylan does say something here and there but only intermittently. It's mostly the colour and the thrash of words he loves. Reading him last year, it occurred to me that there are perhaps two different sorts of poets—those who are of importance to their language and those who are of importance to the generalised language of ideas. I'd link Dylan with Mallarmé, for example, whereas Mallarmé is not my sort of poet, but he is terribly important to the structure of the French language.

—About your earlier work. . . .

All the work I did before I heard the sound of my own voice is hardly worth investigation. *Panic Spring* (1937) was a brain-construct, not a gift. I think *The Black Book*, in which I struck oil for the first time, might suggest a confused sort of sketch for the present "Alexandria Quartet."

—The success of your "Quartet" has made you free for the first time of the need to earn a living otherwise than by writing. Is that a total gain? Eliot, for instance, has recently said that if he hadn't had to bother about earning a living "it would have had a deadening influence" on him.

Yes, Eliot has said so to me. But he has a relatively comfortable job compared to the ones I have had to do for the Foreign Office, mostly in crisis spots. [Durrell was Government P.R.O. in Cyprus during the recent troubles, and wrote of his experiences in *Bitter Lemons*.] They were valuable to me as a novelist, but of not much help otherwise. Also now, I do several different sorts of writing, some painting, some shooting, and some stone-wall building.

SO WE PARTED. But a few days later he wrote on a postcard:

Glad that you seem to realise that all answers

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to questions are *provisional* because I am still growing. Next year I might believe the opposite of all I believe to-day! It's damnable but a fact few critics or admirers grasp when they persuade one to be *ex cathedra* in answering questions. And knowing this, one feels rather a mountebank. . . .

The Masculine Mode

The Spare Chancellor: The Life of Walter Bagehot. By ALASTAIR BUCHAN. *Chatto and Windus.* 25s.

IT IS almost impossible to write of Walter Bagehot to-day without taking, as one's point of departure, G. M. Young's classic description of him as the greatest Victorian.

> . . . A man who was in and of his age and who could have been of no other; a man with sympathy to share and genius to judge its sentiments and movements; a man not too illustrious or too consummate to be companionable, but one, nevertheless, whose ideas took root and are still bearing; whose influence, passing from one fit mind to another, could transmit and still impart the most precious element in Victorian civilisation, its robust and masculine sanity.

"Robust" is not, perhaps, the appropriate term. Alastair Buchan's excellent new biography provides abundant testimony to the effect that a perfect sanity, like any perfect equilibrium, may be a most precarious thing. Bagehot's mother went mad; his half-brother was an imbecile; his wife was an inconsolable hypochondriac; he himself was inexplicably parsimonious—a wealthy man who felt he could not afford cigars. There is indeed a peculiar delicateness of health, physical and mental, that characterises the great Victorians, and especially the most vigorous among them. Victorian "sanity" often seems to be a kind of desperate clinging to social reality by men who, despite their exaggerated prosaic demeanour, had to be perpetually vigilant lest this reality vanish entirely and they be left in a dark solitude.

In one of his letters Bagehot wrote: "My mother, who many years ago was subject to attacks of delirium, has of late fallen into a good deal of habitual delusion and aberration, which, I fear, will end in ultimately disqualifying her for society." That final clause falls a little oddly on our ears. We are no less ready to shudder at the horrors of madness, but we would more likely reckon as the final horror its effect upon our interior life rather than its disqualifying us for society. We have not so keen a sense as the Victorians of society as the refuge of sanity, and of the self as the source of delirium.

One consequence of this difference is that, on the whole, we possess a finer literary sensibility than did the Victorians, so that Bagehot's literary essays do not much impress us, agreeable and perceptive as many of them are. As Mr. Buchan points out, he had "a fear of probing too deep beneath the surface, an instinctive aversion from the tragic in literature and life" which sweetened him for his own age, but rather sours him for ours. But this defective literary sensibility is only the counterpart to a heightened political one, in contrast with which ours is coarse in the extreme. Politics is, among other things, a wholehearted attention to the phenomena of living together and a resolute vigilance against the subterranean noumena, the dark forces that emerge from the depths of personal existence. "The knack of style is to write like a human being," Bagehot declared. As a general prescription, this is inadequate, to put it mildly. Yet as it pertains to the political aspect of writing, it is profoundly true. What makes for great literature, or even for great philosophy, does not make for a peaceable and well-ordered polity. It was not out of sheer ill-humour that Plato banished poets from his ideal republic.

IF THE "ROBUSTNESS" of Bagehot's sanity may be questioned, its masculinity may not. When he said "I am cheerful but not sanguine," he was defining the masculine mode in politics, as against the feminine which is aggrieved and marvellously optimistic. And his description of the age of Gibbon, as one in which authors had ceased to write for students and had not yet begun to write for women, may—from our vantage point—be applied to his own. Victorian women read about politics, of course; but they were not written *to* by the serious journalist. Victorian political journalism was, basically, an extension of masculine conversation—a conversation, moreover, among men of affairs who had first-hand knowledge of what was going on, who read the newspapers primarily for the leaders and the obituaries, and who had an intuitive appreciation of the possibilities and perplexities of human government. There is no *pathos* in Bagehot, no nostalgia for an impossible past nor enchantment with an impossible future—which helps explain why, for the young reader to-day, he seems somewhat alien and forbidding. Even in the universities he tends to be passed over. Any man who could say bluntly

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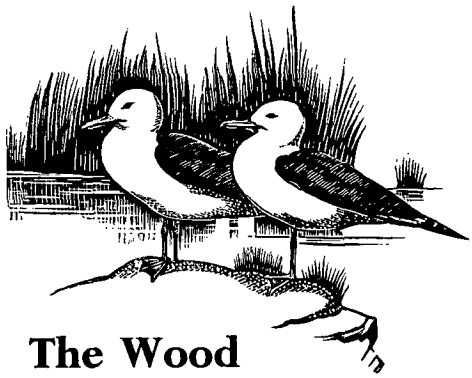

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that "the reason why so few good books are written is that so few people who can write books know anything," does not endear himself to professors, even of "political science."

It is characteristic of Bagehot that, when he treats of any political subject, the temperature surrounding it should drop by several degrees. With the frost, there goes a biting clarity of vision:

> No man has come so near our definition of a constitutional statesman—the power of a first-rate man and the creed of a second-rate mind. From a certain peculiarity of intellect and fortune, he was never in advance of his time. Of almost all the great measures with which his name is associated, he attained great eminence as an opponent before he attained even greater eminence as their advocate. . . . As long as . . . these questions remained the property of first-class intellects, as long as they were confined to philanthropists or speculators, as long as they were only advocated by austere, intangible Whigs, Sir Robert Peel was against them. So soon as the same measures, by the progress of time, the stirring of understanding, the conversion of receptive minds, became the property of second-class intellects, Sir Robert Peel became possessed of them also. . . . If we picture in our minds a nature at once active and facile, easily acquiring its opinions from without, not easily devising them from within, a large placid, adaptive intellect, devoid of irritable intense originality, prone to forget the ideas of yesterday, inclined to accept the ideas of to-day . . . we shall begin to . . . comprehend the character of . . .

Franklin D. Roosevelt, surely? Or even Harold Macmillan? The essence of constitutional statesmanship has not much changed over the past century. We no longer seem, however, as capable as Bagehot was of comprehending it so firmly, with no illusions, no cant, no disdainful malice. Keynes' essays in biography are about the only ones we might propose to stand with Bagehot's; and they are so very feline, so much less substantial, in comparison.

The masculine mode in politics has its limitations, to be sure. Especially it has a tendency towards reducing things to their merely pragmatic dimension, and to concentrate on the business of government, its more immediate profits and losses. Bagehot was not immune to this; but more often he managed, somehow, to make of his self-imposed limitations an original power. Himself between sizes in politics, as he put it, he set out to discover and celebrate the middle order—not the heroic men of action or the brilliant philosophers (of Burke he said that "he saw a great truth and he saw nothing else") but the man-in-politics whose problem was to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way. As Mr. Buchan puts it: "It was mind in action, the pressure of political circumstance upon political principle, that fascinated him." And Bagehot's mind was so constituted as to be preternaturally capable of making, about this middle order, "the rarest kind of discovery, that of the already known." (Such was Leslie Stephen's tribute to *The English Constitution*.) This was a general quality of the Victorian political mind at its best. It was never to any extent a philosophical mind. But it was not simply empirical and improvising, either. In the history of political thought it has somewhat the same status as Jane Austen's novels in the history of literature: not world-moving or soul-shaking, but perfect in its own between-size way.

THERE IS ONE OTHER important respect in which Bagehot's thought can be said to be "masculine"—it is probably *the* most important respect. His way of looking at politics, his vision of the political process, was shaped by a previous instruction in the classics. He was one of the last of the Ciceronians. This meant, first of all, that he was immune to the temptations of historicism—politics was the reconciliation of principle with circumstance, not the invention of principle to suit circumstance (or imagined circumstance). And it meant, secondly (and this follows from the first), that he remained immune to the enthusiasm, the sentimentalism, the messianism, the apocalypticism of the political religions which, even in his day, were beginning to inundate political life.

Bagehot was a democrat in his time, in his country; but he did not "believe in" democracy, as one is supposed to nowadays. To have an ultimate commitment to one form of political organisation would have struck him as a misdirection of faith, which was not to be expended on things temporal. Régimes wax, and régimes wane; democracy could claim no exception to this sublunary fate. In so far as there was one transcending political principle to which he adhered, it was the one he learned from Greek and Roman thought: the best kind of government was that which enabled the best men to govern. We interpret this as an "aristocratic" principle. But before democracy firmly established itself as the sovereign political religion, this was regarded as merely a rational (and practically self-evident) principle. Indeed, it would not have occurred to the Founding Fathers of the American Republic (who also had cut their political eye teeth on Cicero) to question it. And if they were, at the same time, democrats, it was because they were convinced that, in their enlightened age, democracy would ensure the government of the best—what Jefferson called the "natural aristocracy of talent."

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It was as a democrat, in this sense, that Bagehot opposed the Reform Bill of 1867. The current view is that the debate over this measure was waged between democrats and anti-democrats. Nothing could be more misleading. It was a debate *within* democracy. All democratic systems have some kind of limitation on suffrage, even if only based on age. Does it really make sense to assert that a country which grants the vote at 18 is "more democratic" than one which grants it at 21 or 25? And if Switzerland, which refuses the vote to women, is not democratic, what then is it? After the event, Bagehot came to the conclusion that his fears had been exaggerated, that the British urban workers were sufficiently civil to use their votes prudently. But these fears ought not to be contemptuously dismissed as mere prejudice. They are the kinds of fears that any sensible man, who can discern the difference between political philosophy and political demagogy, would do well to entertain. For, as Bagehot said, "nobody will understand Parliament government who fancies it an easy thing. . . ."

Bagehot, like so many of his contemporaries, displayed a powerful detachment from the democracy he was committed to. And it is precisely this combination of detached-attachment that makes Victorian thought on the problems of liberty and democracy—despite all conflicting emphases and variations in specific opinion—so supremely sane.

Irving Kristol

Three Novels

The Humbler Creation. By Pamela Hansford Johnson. *Macmillan.* 16s.

A Heritage and Its History. By I. Compton-Burnett. *Gollancz.* 15s.

The Pledge. By Friedrich Dürrenmatt. *Jonathan Cape.* 13s. 6d.

As a novelist, Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson is something of a mystery, or, if that is putting it too high, of a puzzle. She has so many of the qualities which make a novelist that one cannot quite understand why they do not make her a better one; she sees so many of the significant details of life that one wonders why life seems to have escaped from the picture they finally compose; she writes with a skill and intelligence which many better novelists might envy, yet all the skill and intelligence never persuade one that one is reading anything else but the most readable and most marketable kind of fiction; the kind, that is, which has pretensions to be something more. Perhaps the answer is that the puzzle is simply one of one's own making, and that one is asking, or expecting, more than she wishes to give from a writer who is perfectly satisfied to remain within the narrow limits which circumscribe the contemporary English novel. Even so, one wonders why she should be content with so modest an ambition.

Maurice Fisher, in *The Humbler Creation*, is the vicar of a London parish in one of those residential areas which since the war have suffered a rapid social decline. He is married to a vain, silly, beautiful, frigid woman who gives him no help in his multifarious duties as a parish priest. As a vicar's wife she is a singularly unspiritual Mary; the part of Martha is played by her widowed sister Kate, who with her two teen-age sons shares the vicarage at St. Lawrence's. Miss Hansford Johnson gives a harrowing and convincing account of the claustrophobic world of genteel poverty, overwork, religious apathy, parish gossip, and intrigue, which so many Anglican clergymen are condemned to inhabit; less successfully, she tries to suggest the depth of religious feeling which might make it tolerable for such a person as Maurice Fisher. But his troubles are heavier than most; he is a man not only of deep religious faith but of strong sexual passions which his wife fails to satisfy, and he falls into a love affair, which stops short of bed, with a sympathetic and well-heeled widow who has remained one of his parishioners although she is an agnostic. Equally, his sister-in-law, frustrated in her feelings for him, also has a love affair, which does not stop short of bed, with a drunken and disreputable journalist who however unsatisfactory in other ways is deeply satisfactory as a lover. In her case love and bed lead to marriage and, presumably, to a kind of happiness; in Maurice's, the difficulties of carrying on a love affair and keeping out of bed while remaining a parish priest and a married man lead only to misery. Profane love is sacrificed to sacred, and at the end Maurice sees himself (and Miss Hansford Johnson invites us to agree with him) as one of those martyrs to the faith who continue to praise the Lord while the flames are already consuming his flesh.

Miss Hansford Johnson tells this story with considerable insight and penetration, and the scenes of clerical life in her novel are particularly good. She almost even succeeds in making us sympathise with Maurice's predicament, except that on reflection we realise that no illusion of reality attaches to Maurice's passion either for God or the widow, so that both seem in the

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nature of fantasies invented to compensate for the very real miseries of his life. We feel, in fact, that Miss Hansford Johnson has told an interesting story but has not told the truth about it; and equally that she cannot do this because she shares too many of the illusions which afflict her own characters.

HOW DIFFERENT THINGS ARE when we turn to Miss Compton-Burnett. She has few if any of the conventional talents of the novelist, unless one counts among them a gift for dialogue which we would more naturally associate with the stage. Yet one has only to read the first paragraph of her novel to be plunged once again, all disbelief suspended, into that completely convincing world of the imagination of which all her novels are an exploration. No one has gone further than Miss Compton-Burnett to demonstrate in practice Mr. Henry Green's dictum that novelists should eliminate every element of description; all that we know about her characters is that they live in the country on inherited wealth, at a time and a place which might be anywhere in Western Europe during the last three thousand years but have slightly more resemblance to Edwardian England than anywhere else. Everything else about them we must learn from their own mouths, in words which in their extraordinary combination of subtlety and plain speaking are more like the dialogue of Racine than anything else in literature.

Miss Compton-Burnett has conducted us so often through this mythical and yet real world, in which sophistication is allied to violence, wit to passion, convention to barbarism, that each time we start again we fear that its enchantments may be dulled by repetition, for it is always this same route that we take and the same wonders that we see, but in *A Heritage and Its History* she displays her astonishing gifts as freshly and as brilliantly as ever. Here we are again in that country house where the old are arrayed against the young and always seem younger than their children; where the sexes seem dangerously close to one another and all the more so because the call of blood mingles with the call of sex; where adultery, incest, parricide, sudden death, are normal incidents of family life, to be discussed over the luncheon table; where the butler, like a Greek chorus, understands more of what is happening than the actors in the drama; and where the drama plays itself out in an endless family dialogue whose artificiality is only equalled by the nakedness of the motives it exposes. Miss Compton-Burnett's characters have one skin less than those of ordinary life; they seem to have at least two less than Miss Hansford Johnson's; and their appalling directness is only tolerable because Miss Compton-Burnett, by yet another of the paradoxes of her art, clothes it in a wit and humour which are both savage and uproariously funny.

It is a tribute to her art that it would be pointless to re-tell the plot of her story. It is once again a story of that eternal family in which the sons want to cut off the heads of their fathers and go to bed with their mothers, and no one could tell it as well as Miss Compton-Burnett. All one can say to those who already admire her is that this new variant of the story is as brilliant as any of its predecessors; and to those who have not yet read her novels that this latest one is as good an introduction as any to one of the most astonishing writers of our time.

BOTH THE ENTERTAINMENT and the *frissons* of Miss Compton-Burnett's novels are, for all their sophistication, like those our nurses gave us when they re-told for us stories that have charmed and frightened generations of children; with Herr Friedrich Dürrenmatt in *The Pledge* we are back to more conventional and more mechanical methods of story-telling. Herr Dürrenmatt has acquired, both in his own country and abroad, a considerable reputation as a novelist and as a playwright; London now has the opportunity of seeing his *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* at the Arts Theatre. There is something of the efficiency and effectiveness of a machine in Herr Dürrenmatt's writing; every effect is calculated and strikes home with a precision which makes one wonder whether, after all, so much calculation has not somewhere left something out of account. The effect aimed at, and indeed achieved, is to make us aware, with the greatest economy of means, of what is sinister, sordid, violent, and corrupt in what is known as the Western way of life; and yet again one has an uneasy feeling that Herr Dürrenmatt is more concerned to exploit this effect than to make us understand what makes it possible.

In *The Pledge* a child has been murdered and raped, and an innocent man has been convicted of the crime. Inspector Matthäi, who disagrees with the verdict, is driven to pursue his own investigations into the case and his stubborn obsession with the crime, and the criminal, leads to the disintegration and ruin of his own character. He is a Swiss Maigret (if such a contradiction in terms is permissible) for whom the case goes sour, but he persists in his investigations until, at a moment when his stubbornness, and his sacrifice of his own career, are about to be rewarded, he is cheated by one of those accidents of circumstance which are so hard to distinguish from a writer's trick. *The Pledge* is impressive because of the skill and economy

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with which it is written; but neither the story nor its telling really justifies the dark hints of deeper significance which they so tantalisingly offer us.

Goronwy Rees

Sitting on a Time-bomb

Strategy for Survival. By WAYLAND YOUNG. *Penguin Special.* 2s. 6d.

"MADAM," said Samuel Taylor Coleridge to a lady who had ventured some innocent remark to him, "I accept your conclusion: now you must let me find the logic for it."

Many people, approaching the problem from quite different angles, have come increasingly in the last few years to doubt the wisdom of the British nuclear weapon programme, and to feel alarm at the spread of such capabilities, first to France and then to other nations. In June of this year the Labour Party put forward its proposal that Britain should take the lead in the formation of a non-nuclear club which would restrict nuclear weapons to the United States and Russia, as a first step towards nuclear disarmament. The Labour Party's proposal was in fact a somewhat desperate attempt to reconcile the leadership's determination to retain Britain's position in NATO with the spreading enthusiasm for unilateral nuclear disarmament among the unions and the rank and file. In this book Wayland Young sets out, in the spirit of Coleridge, to find the logic for it—though his proposal is more extensive than Labour's in that he would refuse to permit American or Soviet bases on the soil of the club members.

As every reader of ENCOUNTER knows, Wayland Young is a clear, honest, and lively writer who is not afraid to handle any subject from sitting on a fortune to sitting on a time-bomb. His starting point for this new foray is one that should command very wide agreement.

> In the whole field of strategy and armament it is clear that we are running risks incommensurate with our main purpose, which is to prevent a Russian domination.

The book has two central chapters, one on current strategies and one on possible alternatives. In the first he begins by belabouring one dying and one dead horse—"massive retaliation" and "limited nuclear war." A strategy of pure deterrence is now, as he points out, not a strategy at all, and in this he is at one with all but a handful of writers and planners here and in Washington. But he makes no attempt to explore the extreme difficulties that will confront the West in maintaining, in the missile age, that minimum element of deterrence which is essential to a flexible and stable defensive posture. He then dismisses the strategy of limited nuclear war for very sound reasons, since it was an ephemeral idea developed far beyond its capabilities at a time, three or four years ago, when technological development seemed to make it a feasible alternative and before its appalling disadvantages had become apparent. He has some sound things to say on the dangers of escalation from any use of nuclear weapons. But like Henry Kissinger, he makes the mistake of predicating the advantages and disadvantages of such a strategy on the most unlikely case—war in Western Europe, where escalation would obviously occur automatically—without examining whether it may be necessary to maintain a capability for limited nuclear war as a deterrent to diplomatic blackmail or local incursion on NATO's flanks. Then with considerable courage for an old Aldermaston man, he points out the danger of unconditional nuclear disarmament on the part of Britain, and the extent to which it would collapse the whole structure of Western security in Northern Europe, and leaves his readers to face up to the problem of an expansion of conventional forces.

In examining international policies, Mr. Young first dismisses the French contention (which is a *post hoc* justification of a decision taken for quite other reasons) that international security will be increased when more countries have their own independent means of deterrence. He is equally scathing of a tightening of the NATO alliance, though here again he is guilty of setting up an Aunt Sally in order to knock it down, for he equates the concept of "interdependence" with the setting up of a supranational military authority in NATO—an idea which I have never heard seriously propounded elsewhere. He confuses the integration of military planning and production with the operational control of integrated forces in the remote emergency of a surprise attack, and throws in for good measure the remarkable assertion that "the more closely you integrate a military alliance the more difficult does disarmament become." How would he feel, as Gromyko, if he had to negotiate with a loose alliance? He would also give the untutored reader the impression that Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee are members of NATO. The mistakes of fact and nomenclature are, in this section as elsewhere in the book, too numerous to inflict upon the reader.

All this is by way of a launching-pad for the idea of the Non-Nuclear Club. Mr. Young

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feels that the Labour Party proposal is inadequate. Since it does not preclude the siting of American bomber bases or missiles on the soil of Britain or other club member, it would lead back to their being armed with nuclear weapons by the Americans even if they had renounced manufacture and independent possession. For him, the only safe formula is one whereby the members could renounce not only manufacture, but the stationing of bases and the use of these weapons. In other words, the American nuclear deterrent would be withdrawn entirely to American soil. He does recognise the obvious defect of this suggestion, namely, that Europe would be under the dominance of Soviet short-range missiles and nuclear armed ground forces, and would seek to overcome this by permitting the stationing of a tactical nuclear armed American force in Europe with the specific guarantee that these weapons are never to be used first.

There is perhaps not much point at present in arguing which is the sounder formula; my own preference is strongly for that of the Labour Party over Mr. Young's by reason of the inherent instability and dangers of a world balance of power based on ICBMs stationed 5,000 miles apart, as compared (on present evidence at least) with greater dependability of the IRBMs, which means bases on this side of the Atlantic. My main feeling about this courageous and sometimes illuminating book is that Mr. Young has misconceived the argument for the Non-Nuclear Club. Instead of basing it on strategic considerations which he has only rather superficially mastered, he would have made a much greater impact if he had enquired what were the motives that made first Britain and then France decide to join the nuclear club. He would then have seen that the argument turned not only on strategic but on political and economic considerations, factors of prestige, influence in Washington, commercial and scientific considerations, and many others only secondarily connected with the Russian threat. It is only when these considerations have been met that the policy can be reversed. On strategic grounds alone, some of his arguments could be turned against him: for instance, the real element of suicidal risk that is creeping into the nuclear balance of power does not derive from a number of countries possessing nuclear weapons so much as from the way in which missile and electronic progress is undermining all the warning and other safeguards of the great powers. On economic grounds alone—let alone wider considerations of Britain's true size in the world, of her relations with Africa and Asia, of the desirability of enabling Russia and America to

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negotiate bilaterally, of the enormous advantage of assisting Russia to deny nuclear weapons to China—the case for a non-nuclear club may be a very strong one. It is a pity that Mr. Young has laid himself open to being defeated in detail by the obscurantists through giving battle on the wrong ground.

Alastair Buchan

India's Lost Füehrer

The Springing Tiger. By HUGH TOYE. *Cassell.* 25s.

IN INDIA, village huts, tiny shops, wholesale go-downs, middle-class tenements, are decorated with cheap lithographs of the gods, old calendars, stilted photographs of ancestors, patron saints, clumsy portraits of national leaders. Even the poorest of the poor has a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, an image of Hanuman the Monkey God, or Krishna playing the flute, and, if there is money left over, a portrait of *Netaji*.

Netaji—Subhas Chandra Bose, the aborted Füehrer of India—stands, a hero of legend, frozen at attention in his high leather boots, military cap cocked over dark-rimmed spectacles, bulging eyes, and a big head. There are more lithographs of Netaji than of Nehru in the countryside. Had Netaji lived, Nehru would have had to fight for the leadership of India. The Congress Party would have supported Nehru, but Bengal and the countryside might have backed Netaji. Nehru has been lucky; India has been luckier still.

Indefatigable, a practical and unscrupulous organiser of genius, Subhas Chandra Bose had the gift of facing opposition whatever the cost. "I am an extremist," he used to say; he once wrote to his brother, "I am not a shopkeeper, I do not bargain" (this was a dig at the Mahatma's technique and origin). Whereas Nehru loved India with the patient love of a gardener, Subhas Bose loved India with the furious hatred of a lover. He could not wait. Those who were not with him were knaves and fools, like Gandhi: "an old useless piece of furniture" who refused to realise that "no real change in history has ever been achieved by discussion." Had Bose had his way India would have been ruled by a dictator; not like Pakistan—General Ayub Khan is a product of Sandhurst and proud of it—but like a mixture of Hitler's Germany, Trujillo's Dominican Republic, and Stalin's Russia. "India suffers from so many political ills that only a

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Edited by HAROLD HOBSON

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ruthless dictator can cure her . . . India needs a Kemal Pasha." Subhas Bose saw himself as Attaturk; posterity may look at him less kindly.

Mr. Toye's book suffers from a certain lack of co-ordination and vividness. The characters seldom come to life, the battles always remain hazy. Perhaps the author is too near and too remote from his subject, too honest to give way to his own feelings, too dependent on second-hand material. Yet, *The Springing Tiger* is a valuable compendium of scattered data. The author, swaying between distaste and admiration, strikes a fair balance, letting facts rather than emotions speak.

GIFTED, SENSITIVE, OBSTINATE, SELFISH, young Bose intrigues and sometimes conquers. As a youth he runs away from home to contemplate in the Himalayas. As a young man, stirred by Gandhi's call to "boycott British institutions," he resigns from the Indian Civil Service, a real sacrifice, and enters politics to become almost at once the idol of Bengal. It is no accident that Bose was a Bengali; he combines the frustrations, the exhilarations, the mysticism, and the materialism of Bengal into an explosive mixture; like Bengal, he is quick-tempered, violent, artistic, self-absorbed, with a quasi-psychopathic need to win recognition. "If only they would abuse us!" He could not stand Britain's studied silence. Terrorism tempted Bose the student, Congress ideology repelled Bose the man. When he realised that he could not defeat Gandhi in the Congress, he revolted, formed the "Forward Bloc," and looked for support outside India. It is no accident that support came from Hitler's Berlin. Nazism provided a pattern for boosting Aryan Indian self-respect against British "white-skins"; Germanic precision, by its contrast with Bengali sloppiness, attracted Bose who smarted at the British classification of his own people as "non-martial." He wanted to prove that Bengalis could be as disciplined as Panzer Divisions.

During his exile in Germany Bose's character began to deteriorate; his idealism remained, but the fleshpots grew, and with them deceit. His lack of humility gradually drove him to wrong means. His vision of himself as India's Füehrer —*Netaji* means Füehrer—made him conceal his love and marriage with Emile Schenkl (just as Hitler concealed his marriage with Eva Braun). I have met men who were intimates of Bose in Burma and whom he had repeatedly assured he would never marry because India was his bride.

One finds it difficult to admire a man who lies to further his own legend, who names a regiment after himself, who celebrates annually a week in his own honour, and whose only comment on the Japanese surrender was: "Well, don't you see that we are the only people who have not surrendered?" Bose's habit of going to the Ramkrishna Mission to meditate on the *Gita* while Indians were being tortured by the Japanese is reminiscent of Hitler's tears over a Brandenburg Concerto.

Misjudgment is damning in a politician, defeat fatal in a commander. Netaji misjudged, and was beaten. He hated the British so much that he could not see that Independence was coming, even in August 1945. His hatred made him discount the impact of Russia's and America's entry into the War, and he stubbornly clutched to the belief that Japanese victory meant "freedom from colonialism," despite all the evidence in Burma and Malaya.

Bose's memory has survived these mistakes. He was not all wind or ego. He had the gift of stirring people; he was an admirable organiser, no detail was too trifling for him, and his capacity to improvise was great. His courage was Spartan, whether travelling for eighteen weeks in a submarine, or facing death. And when he could rise above his own ambition and prejudices, he had some historical perception. He believed that the alliance between Russia and the West would not outlast the war: "Soviet Russia may prove a greater nuisance to British and American imperialism than Germany was. . . ." And he had often said that the British Commonwealth must develop into an association of free nations or disintegrate.

Why does Netaji's memory live on so vividly in India that the other day, almost fourteen years after his death, rumours of his impending return from Russia once more circulated in the press? In Bengal, Bose is the one "great leader," a symbol of vitality. But in Gujerat, in Andhra, or Bihar, in all those little huts where Netaji's faded, fly-specked uniform presides over the evening meal, there is a more subtle explanation. Pacifism does not come naturally to a people. Gandhi forced India to choose non-violence to fight the British; Bose made another choice, and that somehow reassures people that they took Gandhi's path from wisdom, and not cowardice.

Mr. Toye's book adds to one's understanding of Bose's legend. But one often disagrees. He sees in Bose "all that went wrong between Britain and India," and he says that "the present aloofness of India from the West followed naturally and inevitably. . . ." Bose was typical of Bengal, not of India. And there is no aloofness between India and the West, unless, perhaps, Mr. Toye expects India to further our interests rather than her own.

Taya Zinkin

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Letter from Berlin

I WAS arrested, with Wolfgang Harich and Bernhard Steinberger, on an unpleasant November evening in 1956, and it was on an equally unpleasant November evening (November 28th, 1958) that I left the East German prison of Bautzen.

But a shadow lay over my release. I did not know whether I was to be really free since my discharge did not take place in the normal manner. Two days before the end of my sentence, in the late afternoon (not in the morning), I was suddenly given my civilian clothes and the prison barber was instructed to give me a quick shave. The whole procedure was very odd. In the Governor's room my wedding ring and watch were given back to me, but no discharge papers. I asked about this, but received no reply, and I began to have terrible forebodings. Was I really going to be set free? One thing was quite clear. My release would be too early for Walter Ulbricht and his chief public prosecutor Melsheimer. I had been sentenced to "only" two years. Were they now regretting this? Did I "know too much" to be allowed the chance of escaping to the West? The *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* would certainly not collapse if I revealed what I knew. Still: I could tell the story of a trial that had taken place in the Russian Zone on the old Stalinist lines at a time when such trials had ceased to take place in Moscow. I could confirm that "the Harich group" who had been found guilty were not Western-inspired "agents" or "conspirators," but intellectuals who were merely trying to introduce Khrushchev's new "line" in the East German Party, the *S.E.D.*, when Ulbricht, Melsheimer, and the others were still reckoning on the victory of Molotov over Khrushchev.

In fact when the gates of Bautzen prison were opened I was met not by my wife but by a member of the *Staatssicherheitsdienst* (*S.S.D.*), whom I knew by the name of Franke. Three weeks previously he had come to Bautzen to discuss my future with me. He wanted to help me settle down again. I was to be given another chance "to prove myself." The past was to be forgotten. He tried to make everything seem so humane in the State Security Service. But there was a cold and calculating purpose. I was to be given a well-paid position in the *Aufbau Verlag* (which was a centre of the anti-Ulbricht opposition of 1956) or a post in another similar cultural establishment—provided I agreed to act as a spy. It was even hinted that the post of *Cheflektor* (with a monthly salary of 1,500 East-marks) formerly held by Wolfgang Harish, who had been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, had only been filled provisionally. I, "the agent," "the conspirator," "the enemy of the workers' and peasants' State," was suddenly to become a confidant of the Ministry of State Security. I was to spy on my like-minded friends in the *Aufbau Verlag* and inform against other personal acquaintances.

The amazingly frank reason which the *S.S.D.* official Franke gave for the great trust which was to be reposed in me so suddenly was: "People will speak openly to you—they will confide in you. . . ."

The whole East German tragedy of Central Germany lies in that sentence. Is Ulbricht not always boasting about the "great confidence" which the workers and intellectuals have in him and his policies? And had we not been described only two years previously as "miserable creatures cut off from the people"?

AT the prison gates there was Franke and not my wife. I was very agitated but was careful not to betray my feelings. However, there was no Black Maria waiting, but a brand-new *Wartburg* limousine. I got in, followed by Franke and the chauffeur. Franke wanted to buy some flowers but the shops were already shut. We stopped in the ancient and historic market-place of Bautzen which I was now seeing for the first time. Franke and the chauffeur took me into a restaurant, and there was my wife sitting at one of the tables. The flowers which Franke had wanted to buy were intended for her. So I was free after all. There was to be a small celebration, a sumptuous meal, at the expense of the *S.S.D.*, but unfortunately my prison ailments prevented me enjoying any of the food and drink.

Afterwards my wife and I were driven to Berlin, and there I was given my discharge papers. I had ben released two days before my term was up, as "a future collaborator," I was to be allowed to spend my tenth wedding anniversary with my wife.

What was I to do? My ailments grew worse immediately after release from prison, and I told the *S.S.D.* that I should first have to become quite well again before taking up a settled post in the autumn. Meanwhile I was given some free-lance work in the *Aufbau* firm. The *S.S.D.* had even developed great hopes for my wife who is a senior physician at the Charité Hospital. We were given an exceptionally comfortable new house—our "key money" was only two-years' imprisonment. After we had moved, I was required to introduce my sister, who was studying in Jena, to the *S.S.D.*

There was a special reason why I stayed on in East Berlin during the summer of 1959 in spite of the increasing police pressure. I knew that the relatives of other victims of the Harich case had submitted petitions for clemency, and I hoped that the fact of my having remained in East Berlin might have a favourable influence. The hope was in vain: they were all rejected. They included two particu-

THIS *is the first authentic account we have of the so-called "Harich conspiracy" in Eastern Germany at the time of the revolutionary events in Poland and Hungary. Manfred Hertwig, a young* DOZENT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE, *was arrested and sentenced together with Wolfgang Harich, and has only recently made his way to the West.*

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larly tragic cases which illustrate East German justice under Hilde Benjamin and Melsheimer. Walter Janka, the former head of the *Aufbau* publishing firm (he was the chief defendant in the second Harich trial in the summer of 1957) is now so seriously ill that the prison doctors do not expect him to live out the three remaining years of his sentence. The second case is that of Bernhard Steinberger who had already been arrested by the *S.S.D.* in 1948 (then it was under Beria's control) and sentenced to fifteen years' hard-labour for "contact with the Hungarian traitor, Rajk." He spent seven years of his sentence in the Siberian camp of Vorkuta; his wife, a Hungarian, was also detained in Hungary during the same period. The innocence of both Rajk and Steinberger has been admitted by the Central Committee. In spite of this, Steinberger was arrested soon after his return home from Siberia, and his previous conviction at the trial was listed as another count against him.

When I heard that the petitions for clemency for the other accused had been rejected there was no further reason for me to stay.

THE events that had led in November 1956 to the arrest of our group of "intellectual conspirators" were prompted by the criticism of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress. Needless to say, there had been pent-up opposition against the policy of the pro-Stalin Communists among all classes of the population, and this opposition was as old as the régime itself. But the rebellion of both the intelligentsia and the masses, which took place in 1956 throughout the Eastern bloc, was the immediate outcome of the news from Moscow.

In February 1956, a few days before the Congress began, I spoke to leading members of the *Institute of Social Sciences* of the *S.E.D.'s* Central Committee. "There will be big surprises in Moscow," they said. "Fundamental changes are about to take place. Things cannot go on as they are now." This from otherwise quite orthodox party ideologists; they derived their prognosis from internal Moscow publications which had been preparing the ground. But when I and the others waited for the decisive news from the Soviet Union in the East German Press. for the first time we had to get our information about important Party happenings in Moscow from the Western Press. All that the East German papers published was the general remarks made by Khrushchev and other speakers. Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin's terroristic methods only became known to us through the West German and West European Press and radio.

Then, suddenly, free discussion spread as never before in Ulbricht's State. I spoke to students, instructors, scientists, intellectuals, inside and outside the Party, and I heard but one view: *Ulbricht muss weg!* The man was one of Stalin's most orthodox disciples in the whole Eastern bloc; for me, as for everyone else, the name Ulbricht stood for German Stalinism. When we said Ulbricht, we also meant Hilde Benjamin, Melsheimer, the *S.S.D.*, and all the evils of a régime which was pretending to develop a socialist, humanist society.

I knew Wolfgang Harich quite well. We had become friends through my work for the philosophical journal of which he was editor-in-chief and also at the East Berlin University. We had both been among those who had disagreed with the policy of the Party on a number of theoretical and practical questions. For a long time we had been "deviating from the line."

In May 1956 Harich had travelled for ten days through Poland, and then came into contact with a very active, democratically orientated anti-Stalin movement. He came back to Berlin full of enthusiasm. "Manfred," he said, "we must really do something ourselves to enable the Party to embark on a new democratic reform policy. Our Polish friends are far ahead of us, and they are disappointed that we have left Ulbricht so completely untouched. . . ." Above all, we now saw new chances for German re-unification. We knew that it would be impossible to solve the national problem unless the *S.E.D.* régime was democratised. What could be done? There was opposition everywhere, even open opposition. Until the autumn of 1956 the *S.E.D.* leadership was in a very marked state of paralysis. Ulbricht was clearly waiting to see the results of the struggle for power in Moscow. He felt insecure himself. It was now possible to express with impunity the view that the recent Ulbricht line would have to be changed. Whereas on the 17th of June (1953) the anti-Ulbricht opposition had given vent to its feeling in a spontaneous workers' rising, the new opposition was being sustained above all by doubt-ridden desperate intellectuals. The revolt of 17th June was directed against intolerable economic burdens from which the masses of the people had been the worst sufferers. In 1956 the economic situation had already improved somewhat, and it was now the intellectuals who were revolting against "the dictatorship of the mind."

Until the autumn of 1956 Ulbricht's public utterances were very restrained. He normally contented himself with a formal reference to the criticism of Stalin; on a few occasions he tried to rebut the charge that he too had indulged in a "cult of personality" by pointing out that he had regularly convened the Central Committee. But who could replace Ulbricht—was there "a German Gomulka"? Some suggested Schirdewan, who had made a few unorthodox speeches and was regarded as a clever, gifted, and versatile tactician. Harich and I were, however, rather dubious about his real position. We were eager to win over Franz Dahlem and Paul Merker as political leaders of the Opposition (both were "purged" members of the Politburo), and also the deposed party ideologist Fred Oelssner. For the time being the discussions continued without a leader. The opposition movement gradually spread to the Press, including the cultural weekly *Sonntag*, whose editors-in-chief Zoger and Just had also been under arrest. In the summer of 1956 Harich decided to try and bring all the opposition forces into a single focus, and he wrote down his *Theses for the Further Development of Marxism*,* his ideas of a comprehensive democratisation of politics, economics, and culture in the Soviet Zone of Germany.

* This text was translated by Sebastian Haffner for *The Observer* (March 17, 1957).—Ed.

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How enviously we looked towards Poland! There things were apparently going better than with us. Georg Lukacs kept us informed about Hungary. (Harich was a close friend of his, and considered himself ideologically his disciple.) We often spoke of Yugoslavia; we respected Tito because he had courageously resisted Stalin and had refused to hand his country over unconditionally; we hated Ulbricht because Moscow meant more to him than our own national problems.

Gomulka came to power peacefully; the pro-Stalinist forces around Molotov had been unable to prevent his succession. In Hungary, on the other hand, the democratic anti-Stalin movement was developing into civil war. We were very much afraid of a similar development in Eastern Germany unless Ulbricht was removed.

Having expressed his views to the Party group, Harich was then commissioned to formulate his proposals. It was suggested for possible adoption as a resolution in the Party monthly *Einheit*.

One day in November I visited Harich and asked, "What's going to happen? Do you see any chance of our soon being rid of Ulbricht?" Harich was optimistic. He told me in confidence that he had discussed the political situation at great length with an influential and highly-placed personality and that he hoped for help from this quarter. Later I learnt that Harich had expounded his ideas to the Soviet Ambassador Pushkin, in whom he had great confidence—because after a previous series of talks he had come to consider him a "political friend." As far as I know Pushkin, in fact, did nothing at all to steer the situation in the *D.D.R.* along the lines of the 20th Party Congress; he did inform Ulbricht of Harich's ideas and plans. In my own view, Pushkin was an orthodox Stalinist.

On November 7th, Ulbricht invited Harich for a talk. Ulbricht, who had obviously been briefed by Pushkin, tried to extract more information. Harich told me afterwards, "Ulbricht wanted above all to know the names of people who shared our views. On the pretext of possibly convening a conference on ideological matters, I was asked to name people who ought to be invited. I kept silent. . . ."

He also told me that "Ulbricht compared our views with those of the Petöfi group in Hungary and branded them as counter-revolutionary. He has got the false idea that all disturbances in the Communist camp, especially in Poland and Hungary, are the product of a few muddle-headed intellectuals. . . ."

Harich was particularly furious about Ulbricht's argument that the criticisms expressed at the 20th Party Congress in Moscow did not apply to Eastern Germany since the same mistakes had not been made here. "Ulbricht has nothing in common with the policy of the 20th Party Congress." After this talk with the First Secretary of the *S.E.D.*, Harich took the view that "we must not capitulate now—we must continue to pursue our aims."

Before submitting his proposals to his colleagues in the *Aufbau* house, he wanted to discuss them with me and with the economist, Bernhard Steinberger, whom I had introduced to him. On November 22nd, the three of us met at Harich's house to discuss proposals for reform which had been duly set down in writing, on behalf of a group of the Party. (In the indictment and judgment this 22nd of November was construed as a day of conspiracy.)

We considered the following problems as in need of immediate solution: the removal of those members of the Party leadership and State machine who were chiefly responsible for the consistent application of the Stalin line to the German Democratic Republic; the restoration of democracy within the Party; the transformation of the so-called *Volkskammer* into a democratic parliament; the restoration of legal security; the dissolution of the State Security Service; the democratisation of cultural life; the decentralisation of the economic life; the dissolution of superfluous ministries; reorganisation of the planning machinery; a new approach to the middle classes; the cessation of compulsory collectivisation.

At the time we felt that a legal opposition to Ulbricht was possible without clashing with the Party. A few days later, when Molotov had risen to the position of Minister for State Control, we began to feel differently.

Steinberger, who had only just come back from Siberia, drew our attention to the possibility of police reprisals and suggested that we shouldn't talk "too openly"; Harich's telephone was already being tapped. In the indictment and judgment this vague precautionary measure, a natural thing in any dictatorship, was represented as indicating "a high degree of conspiracy." And Melsheimer cried out in court: "These proposals of Steinberger's which were accepted by Harich and Hertwig show quite clearly that the accused are conspirators!"

A week later, Ulbricht ordered the arrest of Harich, myself, and several other friends. Why were the intellectuals chosen as the victims? After all, our views were shared in the Politburo by Schirdewan, Oelssner, Selbmann, Wollweber, and others. The reason lay in the struggle for power that was going on in Moscow at the time. Ulbricht was not clear whose line would be victorious, though he hoped that Molotov would come out on top. For the time being, he was being very cautious. Melsheimer was more open. When he interrogated me in private shortly before the trial, he said cynically: "You counted on Khrushchev and realised too late that Molotov is the man. . . ."

In the autumn of 1956 Ulbricht did not yet dare to touch members of the Politburo. Since I know that certain high members of the Party apparatus were far more involved than we, I take it that Ulbricht had decided as a matter of principle not to make any arrests of higher-ups. Harich was a perfect target. His name and intellectual activities were well known but he occupied no position of influence in the Party.

It was only a year later when I learned in prison of the purge of "the Schirdewan group" that I realised that Ulbricht now felt strong enough to eliminate the more dangerous opposition in the Politburo.

As for my trial, I am afraid there is nothing exciting to record. All the trials that have taken place under Ulbricht's dictatorship have been lacking in "sensations." The guilt of the accused is taken for granted before the trial begins, and the

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whole thing is *Theater*, and *schlechtes Theater* at that. In the three days preceding the trial our police interrogators had instructed us repeatedly that we could say of course "anything we liked" in court, but if we said exactly what was in the depositions the sentence would be "considerably less severe."

We were led into court through a dense police cordon. The public was conspicuous by its absence. I recognised all the *S.S.D.* officials with whom I had come into contact since my arrest, including even the barber. There were also a few Communist journalists and a few Party delegates. I caught sight of three well-known personalities: the actress Helene Weigel (the widow of Bert Brecht), the novelist Anna Seghers, and the writer Willi Bredel. They were there "by no accident," but to take "intellectual notice" of the danger we represented to the State. The main idea of the trial was, in fact, to intimidate the rebellious intelligentsia.

The court had before it the depositions and other personal documents which we had been forced to produce, and the whole procedure merely consisted in our having to repeat all over again everything recorded in these documents. As soon as we deviated from them or halted, the chairman intervened. Melsheimer had already read out the whole of the indictment, and it was all read out again in the judgment. Thus a handful of "observers" were no doubt "fully convinced" of our guilt.

Do such trials really help Ulbricht? He still has to combat our ideas of a democratic way to socialism. When I came out of prison, most of my friends shook my hand in an especially friendly way and expressed intense distress at the fate of the Harich group. Ulbricht has since 1956 been able to reconsolidate his own position and the Party organisation, but the outlook of the East-German masses has not changed: the yearning is more intense than ever for democratic reforms.

Now in the West I am constantly being asked about "the situation of the intellectuals" in the Russian Zone of Germany. Behind many of the questions seem to be a number of serious misconceptions. For example: "The intellectuals are selling themselves to the Communists for high salaries." This notion seems to me to be quite wrong-minded. Can the fifteen million Germans in East Central Germany simply pack their bags and move to the West? No, they cannot. Even the "normal" flow of people directly endangered by the Ulbricht régime is no easy problem for the Federal Republic. Is it possible for the entire intelligentsia to desert?

What I am trying to suggest is the very simple point that the great mass of the population, including the intellectuals, have to fit themselves into the system somehow; they have to live with it and in it.

Two examples from my personal experience may serve to illustrate the situation in the year 1959, after fourteen years of Communist dictatorship.

Two weeks after my release from prison I was visited by an old acquaintance from Leipzig. He had studied languages and philosophy, took his doctorate, and embarked on an academic career. For a time he was a member of the Party but "failed to satisfy the requirements." He was not a consistent supporter of the policy and ideology of Ulbricht's party, and he had the courage to break by announcing his resignation. But one of the peculiarities of the *S.E.D.* is that it is possible to join the Party but not possible to resign. He was expelled. That meant the end of his academic career. He is now unemployed: his wife supports the family, he does the housework.

My friend said, "Manfred, two years in prison, not to mention solitary confinement, are hard. But I would be prepared to accept them." I asked why? "Don't you see?" he said. "You can go to the West and they will trust you, you will have a chance to use your professional knowledge, you will be able to live and keep yourself above water. I would be satisfied with a teaching post in the loneliest village in the Federal Republic but I shan't get it. I am not being persecuted by the State Security Service; my life is not in danger; I have no reason to apply for admittance as a refugee. Yet I cannot live here any longer. . . ."

That is what it has come to now, I thought. People envy me because I have been in prison. . . .

In Thuringia I met a former fellow-student of my wife. He is now the head of a department in a university hospital. He is a gifted, hard-working scientist, but is not, however, a member of the Party. For several years he was an *Assistentarzt*. On one first of May he decided to join in the march for "Peace and Socialism." His presence was noted by the cadre department. A doctor outside the Party taking part in the May Day procession—a thing like that is noticed. A point in his favour. Dr. B. also does some trade union work, what is called "social work in a mass organisation." The May Day procession and the social work were the reasons why Dr. B. became the head of a department.

Since then Dr. B. has been trying to make further "progress"; the motives are mixed—he deserves a promotion, he loves his work, admittedly a touch of vanity comes into it as well. He wants to "achieve something in life," but who would criticise him for that? The post of senior physician has been vacant for a long time now. He will never get it. The cadre department is reserving it for a member of the Party. "Should I apply for membership of the Party?" he asked me. I thought of the acute shortage of doctors due to so many having fled from the Zone, and I said, "Perhaps you will be lucky enough to be able to avoid taking this step."

If it were only a matter of deferring plans and aspirations for a mere two or thre years—but fourteen years have already gone by since one dictatorship was superseded by another in *Mitteldeutschland*. Who knows when democratic conditions will ever be established there? It may be a long time—ten years, twenty years. Then the young Communists of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* will be filling all the important posts. And the Dr. B.'s? What price integrity?

Manfred Hertwig

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LETTERS

P.E.N. "Jails and Jamborees"

THE piece entitled *"Jails and Jamborees"* in FROM THE OTHER SHORE (your issue of September) which refers to this year's Annual Congress of International P.E.N. held in Frankfurt, and the decisions taken there in regard to the Hungarian P.E.N. Centre, is both inaccurate and misleading.

The decision to suspend the Hungarian Centre was *not* taken at the Tokyo Congress in September, 1957. It was decided in Tokyo to instruct the General Secretary to pursue an investigation into the conduct of the Hungarian Centre; that part of the Writers-in-exile Centre's resolution which asked for suspension was rejected.

Messrs. Bölöni and Ronai came to London in April 1958 to have talks with the then International President of P.E.N., André Chamson, and myself, at our pressing invitation. It will be seen, therefore, that these talks were not preliminary to Tokyo but followed the initial stages of the investigation, and the appointment by the International Executive Committee in March, 1958 (*not* "late in 1958") of the Committee of Five—which in addition to M. Chamson and myself, included Victor van Vriesland, President of the Netherlands Centre; Richard Friedenthal, Vice-President of the Bundesrepublik Centre; and Aziz Ahmad, Secretary of the Pakistan Centre—empowered to continue the investigation, and to take the decision to suspend the Centre if this proved to be the right course.

M. Chamson and I reported on our interview with Bölöni and Ronai and the Committee of Five decided to suspend the Hungarian Centre and promulgated its decision after meeting in Paris early in May 1958.

Your contributor's misrepresentation of the sequence and dating of events suggests at best muddled thinking. Indeed, one suspects a desire, conscious or unconscious, to convey a false picture. Certainly the gibe that the Committee of Five indulged in *"realpolitik"* is false. And nothing could be further from the truth than that the Frankfurt Congress endorsed the decision to raise the suspension "amidst festive chit-chat along Rhine and Main."

You, Sir, Mr. Tweedledum—or is it Mr. Tweedledee?—attended the Frankfurt Congress as a Guest of Honour. It would perhaps not be an overstatement to say that in the matter of "Jamborees," if that is what serious international gatherings of creative artists need to be called, you are, yourself, more experienced than most. While you were not present at the long and concentrated meeting of the International Executive Committee, you attended, and intervened at, the Business Session of the full Congress the next day, and must, I feel, have been fully aware that everyone taking part in the discussion was as serious and concerned as you were.

You must know that the re-admission of the Hungarian Centre was not "unconditional," neither was it a "surrender." The Hungarian representatives, Bölöni, Geryblyes, and Kery, promised to press their government to release the imprisoned writers in Budapest, and to make known, through their literary journals, the text of the telegram sent, over the names of André Chamson, Alberto Moravia, Erich Kaestner, and myself, to the Hungarian Government pleading for an act of clemency "at the moment when the Hungarian P.E.N. Centre recovers its membership of International P.E.N., particularly in relation to Tibor Déry and Gyula Hay.

P.E.N., as you yourself know, Sir, has a good record in helping refugees and in doing what can be done, through organised protests for imprisoned writers, victims of tyranny, Communist or Fascist. P.E.N. has not been idle these past three years on behalf of Hungarians, as George Paloczy-Horvath and Paul Ignotus and their colleagues well know. That the Hungarian Government has seen fit to refuse the appeal of the Frankfurt Congress has saddened and disappointed many, but it may not be without significance that it has at last, long last, been induced to reply by telegram to a representation from P.E.N.

I have already asked the Hungarian Government what is meant in their telegram by the words *"at present* your request cannot be fulfilled," and what are "the proper conditions" which would allow of an "act of grace." Further, I have written to the re-admitted Hungarian Centre asking for evidence of implementation of their delegates' promises. The Centre's executive can hardly imagine that without such evidence International P.E.N. will be content to leave matters as they are.

Finally, your contributor's rhetorical question as to whether or not "high literary life in the West" (whatever that may mean) can no longer tell the difference between Jails and Jamborees, seems to me sad evidence of a mind engrossed in scoring journalistic points. He must know that no one involved in this distressing and exhausting matter is concerned to play "at international affairs as if they were calculating card-up-the-sleeve diplomats."

We in P.E.N. are deeply involved, as we always have been, on behalf of writers everywhere, and we shall continue to be so involved acting in good faith, doing what appears right for us to do.

DAVID CARVER
General Secretary, International P.E.N.

Glebe House, London

[STEPHEN SPENDER *comments on this letter in* FROM A DIARY, *p. 58.*]

"Exile in London"

IN YOUR August issue Paul Ignotus, in his article *Exile in London*, describes the B.B.C.'s wartime broadcasts to Hungary as "atrocious" and he accuses them of "dullness." I cannot quarrel with his views in his vocation as a self-appointed critic, but they do not coincide with those of the listeners who, before the Rakosi régime came to power,

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were able to communicate with the West, and of the many Hungarians who have visited or fled to the West since then. The true picture is perhaps better portrayed in a tribute broadcast by Budapest Radio on Friday, November 14th, 1947, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the B.B.C. This broadcast remarked:

> Every Hungarian is fully aware what the Hungarian Service of London Radio has meant for them in the last years of the war. From transmission to transmission Beethoven's Fifth Symphony found an echo in all Hungarian Radio receivers. The BBC's short-wave European Service has rendered immeasurable service during the war. . . . Hungarian Radio listeners now wish, with love and gratitude, that the British Broadcasting Corporation should continue triumphantly on this road towards its golden jubilee.

I regret the allusion of Mr. Ignotus to the principal Commentator of the Hungarian Service in the early years of the war, for there is plenty of evidence from other sources that this speaker, with his sympathy for Hungary and his knowledge of Hungarian, was deeply appreciated by Hungarian listeners of all political allegiances.

JAMES MONAHAN
Controller European Services

BBC, Bush House
London

[PAUL IGNOTUS writes: *I am glad to endorse the tribute paid by the Budapest radio to the BBC. I rather think I wrote it myself. We all had friends amongst the Hungarian leaders of the 1945–47 coalition period, and I got them several times to issue statements in the endeavour to save what could be saved of the spirit of the wartime alliance. More important, the tribute was well deserved. The B.B.C. news service was excellent, and its including Hungarian broadcasts was a blessing. My criticism of the broadcasts made by a well-known scholar and Friend of Hungary, is that they were directed too much to the friends of Admiral Horthy and that they did not address socialists, liberals, or conservatives out of sympathy with that régime. I have no doubt that his love of Hungary found him a sympathetic audience. But, for example, the German language services of the B.B.C. were listened to by many German-speaking Hungarians for the excitement of the ideas of freedom and social progress which they communicated to all classes of people.*]

"Humanism" in Africa

THE number of conferences which have taken place in Africa or concerning African affairs in the past few years has been steadily increasing, but has not yet reached saturation point. Conferences in Cairo, Tunis, Accra, Senegal, largely inspired by Africans themselves; cultural conferences in New York, Tashkent, London, Paris, Rome—all these have given platform to whatever there is of "the African Personality" and have pointed out the difference in outlook and thought between the British and French African.

Herbert Passin [ENCOUNTER, September] noticed this vividly in Ibadan. The difference appeared to him to be the one between "Jean-Paul Sartre and Sidney and Beatrice Webb." Writing about another conference, Thomas Hodgkin, an Oxford authority on African affairs, goes even further back and sees it as "the difference between Descartes and Hume." But Aimé Césaire's *Négritude* and Nkrumah's *African Personality* insist on an underlying unity. Whilst it is clear that the difference goes beyond language, it is not clear how long it will last in the future of independent African states. The realisation of this difference by Africans themselves and the increasing efforts being made to remove them (as at the Continuation Committee in Lomé, Togoland) shows that it is a difference which will and can be removed. After all, it is less than two generations old in the majority of cases.

The question of "Federation" dates further back than the post-war era. About thirty years ago there was formed the National Congress of British West Africa, largely inspired by British-educated professional Africans; but the move towards unitary governments of different territories has been chiefly the product of American-educated or-influenced ones. Azikwe started in Nigeria his nation-wide N.C.N.C. party; Nkrumah went further and has never flagged in his ambition for a "United States of Africa"; he has initiated conferences to this end and he struck a decisive step forward with the Ghana-Guinea union. Tubman of Liberia has come forward with his idea of the looser Associated States of Africa. The French Africans, on the other hand, have started to see economic survival also in Federation—the Mali Federation of the territories of Senegal and the Sudan (*"Honi Soit qui Mali Pense,"* its opponents say), and the loose economic union between Ivory Coast, Niger, and Upper Volta all within the French Community of de Gaulle.

These criss-cross linkages are seeking to undo the Treaty of Berlin in the 1870s which divided Africa into European spheres of influence; or, again, one might say this treaty gave the impetus which broke the internecine strife of Africa and has prepared it to forge a stronger and present unity.

Herbert Passin envisages the future with an optimism unusual but pleasing in commentators on African affairs. There are points, however, where there may have been a tendency to oversimplification. To represent the Oni of Ife (pronounced Eefay) as being representative of chieftainship in British Africa is to take Bertrand Russell as representative of the intellectual standard of the British aristocracy. The Oni Aderemi of Ife is so outstanding in ability, intelligence, and diplomacy that he would be looked up to as leader by any political party in power in Yorubaland. In general, however, it may be said that the battle between chiefs and politicians is over and the victory, except in Northern Nigeria, appears to have gone to the latter. The former hold power by virtue of their spiritual position, and increasingly more important, by non-interference in party politics. The title of "Chief" in the British territories seems curiously to have followed the British pattern of enervating the power but retaining the *cachet* of the name. Thus,

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as a politician in Britain may be given the title of Viscount Newmarket with little power if any in that city except birth or property nearby, so a Nigerian politician may, in his home town in the sometimes remote provinces, be given an honorary chieftaincy as a reward for making good, and secondarily, to impress title-conscious Europeans and Americans.

The rôle of the opposition is seen differently by those who have power and those who have not. No government in the world ever goes to the electorate because it thinks its power is too strong and the opposition too weak for the democratic process. That this amount of saintliness is expected of Africans may be the perfection inexperienced teachers expect of their favourite pupils. The views held by African governments of their oppositions vary from the Dahomian M. Adande's fear of "happiness leaking away if the holes in the jar are not stopped by all hands," through that of Ghana, worried by an armed revolt, to that of the imperturbable President Tubman of Liberia, whose comment on his Presidential victory of over 180,000 votes to his opponent's 24 was: "... we believe inherently in a two-party system of government ... on the other hand when the people have approved the policies and trends of an administration ... they have refused to organise an opposition." It is clear from all this why there is such an air of hysterical desperation amongst some Opposition political parties in Africa. The nearest thing to a two-party system as it is understood in Britain and America, is in the House of Representatives in Ibadan.

The dilemma of the African-educated élite is how to try and lead the masses in the direction of Western democracy, but the present African élite cannot be said to be truly representative. They are too imbued with foreign ideas, and most of the buttress of the present political system is imported. There are not many able ones to think out a political philosophy (as the Ibadan Conference was trying to do), and they are too busy governing or opposing. The next generation (affected but not immersed in European thought) may have a more decisive influence. They are beginning to arise. The chief danger with them is arrogance; but this gives them the courage of the recruit who has not been into battle before. They are the people whose disregard for the stern, admonitory editorials of the London *Times*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, or *Le Monde* is so complete as to be positively awe-inspiring.

It is so easily assumed by the outside world that "native" graduates of the Sorbonne, Columbia, Oxford, the British Inns of Court, the London School of Economics, and Sandhurst, are the natural heirs in Africa and Asia to rulership vacated by the British and French. Even militant Singapore seems to have surrendered to a Cambridge double first. But I wonder if these leaders are not like wartime politicians and generals whom the people may after some time, perversely, want to oust.

In optimistic moments Herbert Passin's sure-footed gradation of a country from Colonialism to a Nature Economy seems inevitable. But one cannot help pausing to think sometimes what life will be like under the successors of Nehru, Nkrumah, Azikwe, and Awolowo, in fifteen years' time. At least these leaders believe in Western democracy. But they learnt most of it abroad. Is there enough of it embedded in their counties to transmit it? Probably, yes. However, it seems to me that if Europe and America really believe in democracy their duty to new countries is not to stand aside, and either criticise loftily or watch expectantly, but to move forward actively and infiltrate these countries with their ideas of humanism as passionately as the 19th-century missionary and 20th-century Communist have done and are doing with their own beliefs.

ABIOSEH NICOL

Sierra Leone

Cannibals?

YOUR October issue seems unusually anthropophagous. On the back page, you advertise a book called *Eating People is Wrong*. I shied off that only to find a sentence by my friend Miss Nancy Mitford which begins: "There is a standing order for fifty luncheons at the inn: while they (the Germans) eat the Leader. . . ."

Perhaps she is on to something. Is there going to be a fashionable Cannibalistic Movement?

OSBERT SITWELL

London

Shakespeare in Stratford

IT WOULD be a pity if Robert Brustein's grimly amusing account of productions of Shakespeare in the U.S.A. [ENCOUNTER, September] should lead to complacency about productions in England. What he says about Stratford (Conn.) might almost have been written about Stratford (Eng.). The Memorial Theatre contrives to attract crowds from all over the world—at Shakespeare's expense—and one hears members of the audience express surprise at not having been bored.

As at Stratford (Conn.) we have a stage dominated by machines (e.g., a farm-cart piled with wheat to illustrate "ripeness is all" and a huge and expensive machine for shooting arrows in the battle Shakespeare was careful to omit from his script). We have some of the best actors and actresses in the world, often tragically miscast. It is difficult to imagine anyone less suited to the part of Lear than Mr. Laughton, or less suited to Desdemona than Miss Mary Ure. There is a horrible mixture of styles. In the *Dream* Theseus was not in the same millennium as Helena, Hermia, and their boy-friends. The meaning of four out of the five plays this season was buried "under a ton of gimmicks"—an asthmatic Doge, a drunken Regan, the guying of Shakespeare's supposedly feeble rhymes, a spectacular assassination of Coriolanus (in an otherwise fine production), a storm-scene in *King Lear* minus a storm, a Bottom without an ass's head. The order of the lines was

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altered, some speeches being given to the wrong characters. One well-known and, indeed, excellent actor spoke his whole part without ever dropping into the verse rhythm, and without once stressing the right word. Such persistence in error could not have been accidental.

How could Dr. Guthrie, who has often given us productions faithful to the spirit of the text, bring himself to ruin *All's Well*?

The Memorial Theatre is our nearest approach to a National Theatre, but there have been few productions in recent seasons which have not been based on the assumption that Shakespeare is an indifferent dramatist who can only be made palatable to modern audiences by adaptation. When will our producers learn—as they might learn from a production like Sir John Gielgud's *Much Ado*—that Shakespeare's plays are most effective when they are given in an unadulterated form? This is not the complaint of an academic who prefers the study to the stage: it echoes the feelings of thousands of people who go to Stratford each year expecting to see Shakespeare because they happen to like his plays, and come away each year feeling that they have been cheated by clever producers who are too sophisticated to believe that anyone really wants to see a "straight" performance of such childish plays.

If producers don't like Shakespeare, why can't they produce something else?

KENNETH MUIR

Birkenhead,
Cheshire

B.B.C.

MR. Henry Fairlie in his article on the B.B.C. in the August number of ENCOUNTER suggested that the Press is a less poisonous purveyor of news than the B.B.C., and that it was infinitely preferable to read the *Daily Herald* where things are so "plainly represented" than to switch on the B.B.C. news bulletin at one o'clock. Did it ever occur to him that many people do both—and often very profitably?

For a regular reader of a newspaper the B.B.C. is not a lion in sheep's clothing or a mere obsequious bastion of the Establishment. It has very often the advantage for what it is worth of getting in first with the news.

MARY POOLE

Lytham, Lancs

Barzun, Berlioz, Brahms

Aimez-vous Brahms. . . ? Sir Charles Snow should not give away which of the two cultures he belongs to so easily—Barzun wrote a life of *Berlioz* not *Brahms*.

D. L. SIMMS

London

"Keeping it Dark"

IN re David Thomson's comment [ENCOUNTER, November] on my article: The United States manage virtually without a closed period for public records; and their foreign policy is not markedly worse than that of others. "Politicians and diplomats and civil servants" ought to feel the people breathing down the back of their necks; and ought to be glad to feel it too.

A. J. P. TAYLOR

Magdalen College,
Oxford

Interesting

Do you ever vet things for elementary correctness? I mean, does (e.g.) Goronwy Rees (ENCOUNTER, October, "The Teen-age Thing," p. 73, next-to-last sentence) have to write "disinterested" when he means "uninterested"?

JOHN WAIN

London

[GORONWY REES writes: *Mr. Wain's remark is not uninteresting. I wrote* DISINTERESTED *because I meant* DISINTERESTED, *which means having no profit or advantage to gain, and politicians are* DISINTERESTED *in teen-agers because they haven't any votes. If I had said* UNINTERESTED *I should have meant something different, and I think something which was either false or meaningless. But it's nice to be given the benefit of close reading by experts like John Wain, even when they're wrong.*]

The United States Post Office requires ENCOUNTER, *in common with other magazines, to issue the following Statement for a second-class mail permit in the U.S.A.*

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Signature of business manager: John Hall.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of September, 1959. Ronald S. Friedman (a Commissioner for Oaths for life).

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AUTHORS

James Morris *writes*: "Was born in 1926, and have been writing hard since childhood. Educated at Lancing and Christ Church, Oxford, soldiered in Italy and the Middle East, and later worked for the Arab News Agency in Cairo. Spent five years on the *Times*, including year on a Commonwealth Fellowship in America, representing it on Sir John Hunt's Everest expedition, and as Middle East Correspondent. Have worked since 1956 intermittently for the *Guardian*, and now spend six months of the year as a foreign correspondent for that obliging paper, and six writing for myself. Have written six books—*Coast to Coast* (about America), *Sultan in Oman* (about a journey in Arabia), *The Market of Seleukia* (about the Middle-East), *Coronation Everest*, *South African Winter*, and *The Hashemite Kings*. Am just finishing one on Venice, called *Venice*. Enthusiasms include cats, ships, and Admiral "Jackie" Fisher. Am married, have two sons, and want to buy a house in Wiltshire."

Miss **C. V. Wedgwood** *writes*: "Although I have been a publisher's reader (with Jonathan Cape), a literary editor (*Time and Tide*), and judge of various literary prizes, I am a historian by taste and training. I was educated unconventionally and travelled a good deal, acquiring an insatiable taste for the visual arts. On leaving Oxford I embarked almost at once with astonishing industry and even more astonishing impertinence, on a full-size history of the Thirty Years' War (recently Penguinised). Since then I have written mostly on the English 17th century, *The King's Peace*, *The King's War*, etc. I have been since 1952 a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, where most of my books get written. . . ."

Russell Warren Howe, who is living now in Nigeria, after his recent expulsion from Ghana (see ENCOUNTER, June and September), *writes*: "George Padmore died in hospital in London on September 23rd, a few weeks after my article (now revised) was written. He had been flown from Accra for emergency treatment. . . . I remember him saying, only a few months ago, 'The great problem facing Africa is not liberation any more, but efficiency.' George played a leading rôle in solving the first problem. It is up to the continent he helped to emancipate to solve the second."

Terence Prittie *writes*: "Born 1913, in London. Son of fifth Lord Dunalley. Brought up in Co. Tipperary, Ireland. Educated Cheam School, Stowe School, Christ Church, Oxford. Served in war with the Rifle Brigade (M.B.E., mention in despatches). Taken prisoner Calais, 1940. . . . Entered journalism as reporter on London staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, with view to being trained as future Sports Editor, February 1946. Previous journalistic experience nil, as had worked pre-war with Childs Bank, and on the Stock Exchange. Cricket Correspondent, May–September, 1946. Correspondent in Germany since October, 1946, first in Berlin and then in Bonn. . . . German correspondent for the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *New Republic*. Have broadcast for past six years for BBC, Third Programme. Books published include *Escape to Freedom* (war-time escapes), *Mainly Middlesex*, *Lancashire Hotpot* (cricket), and a *Short History of Middlesex Cricket*. . . . Recreations: philately and wine. Married (two sons). Politics: left-wing Conservative (but not a Liberal). . . ."

Marguerite Yourcenar, daughter of a French father and Belgian mother, was born in Brussels. She has travelled widely, with long stays in Italy, Central Europe, and Greece, and now resides in the U.S. (on the island of Mt. Desert, off the coast of Northern Maine). . . . Her works (all written in French) include six novels, two volumes of short stories, two of essays, and three volumes of translations (Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*; Henry James, *What Maisie Knew*; Constantine Cavafis, *Poems*); a play, *Electra*, was presented in Paris in 1954. Her *Memoirs of Hadrian*, a Book Society Choice, apeared in 1955; her *Notebooks* on the writing of this historical novel was published in the *Anchor Review*. A novel of the Baltic struggle of 1919–1920, *Coup de Grâce*, came out in 1957.

Anthony Sampson (as he writes of himself) combines uneasily the job of gossip with writing books about Africa—or, as one reader complained, "a baroque interest in power with a radical interest in Africa." He began his journalistic career as Editor of the African magazine *Drum* in Johannesburg. Since then he has become progressively more junior, from assistant-to-the-Editor of *The Observer* to gossip-writer and hack. His third book, *Commonsense About Africa* (a kind of poor man's Gunther) will be published by Gollancz soon. . . . Westminster School, the Navy, and Christ Church, Oxford, left him with an apathetic conservatism, which wobbled increasing during four years in Africa, and finally collapsed after Suez and Devlin.

Anatole Shub is an assistant editor to the New York monthly, *Commentary*. . . . **Kenneth Young** is on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. . . . **Willard Thorp** is a professor of literature at Princeton University.

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